They Also Serve

Peter B. Kyne

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by

PETER B. KYNE

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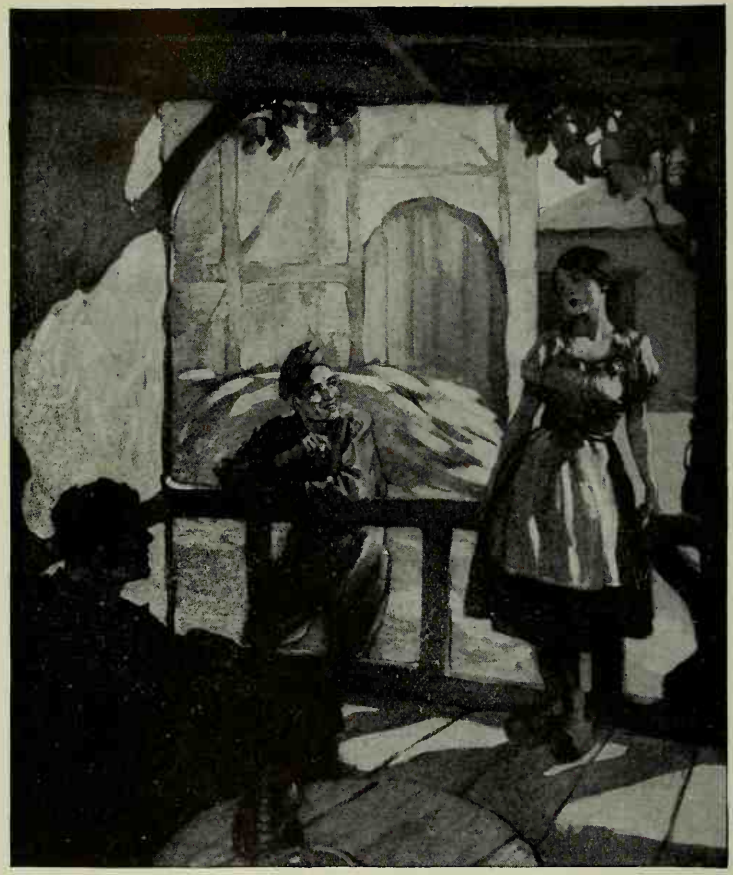

If French girls love a man it never occurs to them to hide the fact.

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By

PETER B. KYNE

Illustrated by
C. LEROY BALDRIDGE
with decorations by
PAUL BROWN

Cosmopolitan Book Corporation
NEW YORK MCMXXVII

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in the U. S. A.

To My Friend

CAPTAIN THOMAS T. C. GREGORY

In Memory of Unforgetable Days
Together as Battery Commanders
in the A. E. F.

ILLUSTRATIONS

If French girls love a man it never occurs to them to hide the fact . . . . *Frontispiece*

"I didn't pay much attention to their chatter until I heard him call her Mary" . *Facing p.* 84

"I gathered all the strength I had and swam as I had never swum before" . . *Facing p.* 176

Within the hour we moved again, and a plane came over and bombed the gun crews . . *Facing p.* 298

THEY ALSO SERVE

CHAPTER I

THE never-ending talk about the Great War that goes on between the Skipper and the Top is what got me started on this story. Were I a man instead of a horse I would write it and call it my autobiography, because in my story I am going to include everything of any importance that has ever happened to me up to the present—when nothing happens any more. For I consider I have lived my life, and hereafter about all I shall do will be to stand around, switch flies and talk about the portion of my life wherein I truly lived.

Death was always very close in those days and that, I suppose, is what endears them to me. Certainly it

seems that way with the Skipper and the Top, for every morning when the Top ties me to the ring-bolt set in the sunny side of the barn, and starts wiping me down with a salt-sack (a salt-sack, by the way, is the best thing in the world to wipe a horse down with) the Skipper always comes limping along and says:

"*Bonjour, mon sergent.* How's *your* stump this fine morning? Mine aches a little."

Immediately the Top will straighten up, balance himself by leaning a little on me, salute the Skipper with as much snap as if we were all in the service still and reply:

"The great toe I haven't got still itches, sir, and the desire to rub that phantom toe is sure getting on my nerves. Sometimes I feel as if I'll just naturally have to ask the captain for a three-day pass so I can get good and drunk and forget it."

Of course the Top doesn't really mean that, because if he had been a drinking man—that is, if he had had a habit of taking more than a white man's share of the stuff—he'd never have been top cutter in our battery.

Not so, Bolivia! It requires a Man for that job!

Well, every time the Top makes that old crack the Skipper replies: "I understand perfectly, Sergeant. If it wasn't for the Commanding Officer I'd be inclined to join you in a good old A. E. F. jamboree."

"If there was only a good *estaminet* around here where a man could lap up a small bottle of *vin rouge* without getting plastered, that'd be some comfort," the Top always complains. "A man can't throw a rock up in the air nowadays without having it come down on an old soldier. If we had some place where we

could get together and talk over old times, there's a few things we might manage to forget. Cork legs and phantom toes that itch, for instance."

"Well, if you're ever tempted beyond your strength let me know," the Skipper always replies to that, "and I'll give you a bottle of something that won't poison you. By the way, it occurred to me just before I left the house that you might be low in spirits." And with that he pulls a flask and unscrews the lid and hands it to the Top, who helps himself to a snort and hands it back with the remark that that there's certainly some neck oil.

Then the Skipper will take a nip, just as I've seen him do a hundred times in France. Ah, we old soldiers! If his butler should set a soiled glass before the Skipper what a rawhiding that butler would get! Yet, when it comes to drinking out of the same canteen with the Top, the Skipper isn't a bit particular. As a matter of fact, I'm that way myself. Back in 1918 when I was the Skipper's mount I've drunk muddy water from the same shell hole with old Tip, who was a mule and, perhaps, the roughest, toughest, hardest-boiled, shin-kicking old hybrid that ever hauled a chow gun or packed a mountain howitzer. I ranked Tip too, but one forgets that when he's wallowing in the mud and blood with a comrade. One just remembers he's your buddy, even if, for purely social reasons, he could never possibly wear an officer's saddle-cloth; you respect him as a warrior and that's all that's necessary.

The Skipper respects the Top that way, and they have a fellow feeling for each other deeper than that. The Skipper lost his left foot at the ankle and wears a

shop hoof you couldn't tell from a real one unless you heard him rapping his stick against it, and the Top has lost his right leg just below the knee and wears a cork leg the Commanding Officer bought him after they all came home from France. Still, both seem to ride about as well as they ever did, and I ought to know because they both ride me—the Skipper for his pleasure and the Top for my exercise.

Sometimes I think I'd like to miss reveille now that I'm getting middle-aged, but the Top is still the Top. For twenty minutes after the alarm clock goes off in his quarters I can hear him puffing and thumping around in his front yard, doing his setting-up exercises. Presently he comes over and gives me a friendly boot in the tail with his timber toe, and I have to get up and be groomed. Then we have our chow, the Top polices up our quarters, and an hour later we go for a ride.

Take it from me, we're all living the life of Riley.

I think I would have been content to hug my memories to myself, but I find that impossible with the Skipper and the Top (and occasionally the Commanding Officer) always making some crack about the good old days. Their jabber finally aroused the curiosity of Charles O'Malley, who got pestering me for details.

O'Malley is an Irish hunter the Commanding Officer imported, and like all of the Irish he's full of fight, frolic and romance. He was a foal when the Great War broke out or probably he wouldn't be so confounded curious about it now. In fact, O'Malley has been pestering me for a month to tell him the story of my soldier days in Battery F of the ——th Field

Artillery, United States Army; all about the men and dogs and horses and mules I met and served with. Indeed, so insistent has this Mick become that he's gotten Taffy all worked up about it too.

Taffy is a Welsh pony and belongs to the Brat. The Commanding Officer presented the Skipper with the Brat that first year they were married. Taffy's a nosey little cuss and tricky as they make 'em. What that half-portion of a horse needs is a whole lot of disciplining, and between you and me he gets it oftener than he likes. When I can't induce him to keep his mouth shut while his superior officer is talking I run him into a corner of the fence and bite his little fool neck until he squeals.

Well, anyhow, O'Malley and Taffy have gotten me to promise to tell them my story. The family is going away to see the Coffroth Handicap run at Tia Juana and the Top looked so wistful when the Skipper announced the fact that the Skipper told him to come along, too, and leave us for a couple of days in charge of Enrico. Enrico is a Mexican or Indian or something and a very lazy fellow, so we know he'll turn us out in the meadow and forget about us. So O'Malley suggested we might hole up in the corner formed by the paddock fence and the brook, stand there in the water under the weeping willow trees and have a good old-fashioned *conversazione,* as the Frogs would express it. I'm to start in at the beginning and just ramble along in my own way, and if I get boresome or appear to brag or gild the feathers of fact with the fur of fancy, they can stop me.

CHAPTER II

WELL, boys," I began when Taffy, Charles O'Malley and I settled for our chat, with our heads together and our tails sweeping the flies from each other, "I suppose I might as well start in by telling about my early life as a civilian. I think it will prove interesting to you, O'Malley, because you were born and reared in Ireland, which I saw through a port-hole when our transport was passing down the Irish Sea. Even from a distance the place looked green, so I imagine the feed is fully as good as you say it is. Life there, however, cannot possibly be as jolly as you picture it.

"As for you, Taffy, you were born in a barn and raised in a paddock; you've never been anywhere and haven't seen anything, so don't interrupt me once I get started telling you about the place where I was born and raised, because neither you nor O'Malley can have the slightest conception of the sort of country it was, and the grand free life I led."

"Cut out the preliminaries," said O'Malley, "and get down to the fighting."

I was greatly tempted to let O'Malley have both heels, but remembering he is Irish and therefore impatient I decided to overlook his almost rude interruption. I know the Irish pretty well. They're a great worry as barrack or camp soldiers, but in the field

they're very dependable. O'Malley is like that. On a drag-hunt, when other horses refuse a fence without even trying, this hair-brained O'Malley will try it once if it kills him. He has the Irish instinct for dramatizing himself and the Irish luck of getting away with it nine times out of ten.

I was silent for a minute, following O'Malley's interruption, for I desired to rebuke him. Taffy murmured something about the Irish being short on manners, to which O'Malley replied with unnecessary asperity that everybody knew the Welsh for an undistinguished race. "Your pardon, Prof," he added humbly. "I'll not interrupt again."

I forgot to state, in the beginning of this narrative, that I am called Professor, or Prof for short. I am a high-school horse and dance rather well with the Commanding Officer up at horse shows.

I was born (I resumed) in the spring of 1912 on the open range in Modoc County, California, and have quite a clear recollection of the time and the place. I came into the world at daylight, down on a bar beside a creek where all the animals on that range came to drink. The ground was a soft silt, and lush green grass grew thickly upon it—just the place to drop a foal. My mother had selected the spot with great care because it was open ground and she would thus be enabled to observe the approach of any creature imbued with felonious intent toward my helpless self.

I am of good family, if I do say so myself. My sire was a thoroughbred, both of whose parents had been bred in the purple. They had raced on every

track in the United States and Canada and usually were in the money. At any rate they were far from a source of expense to their masters.

My dam was half thoroughbred and half Percheron. Her ancestry could be traced, however. She was a very beautiful creature, the Percheron strain in her giving her a weight of about thirteen hundred pounds, and a sweet temper, while the thoroughbred gave her grace, spirit and stamina. She was brown, with large dapples, and her name was Nellie.

My sire, registered in the American Stud Book as Sir Nigel, was in later life given the alias of Sandy, for a cruel misfortune denied him the heritage of his glorious blood. I do not mean to say that my sire was actually unhappy over it, but it *was* a disappointment to him and he never did get over a feeling of chagrin at the lack of faith in him which his original master had manifested.

In a word, my gallant sire was a throwback. He was small at birth and because of his color (he was a palomino—a yellow horse with silver mane, foretop and tail) the traditions of the racing world indicated that he would never amount to anything as a meal-ticket for his master. He was assumed to be a throwback to one of his Arabian ancestors and, notwithstanding the fact that all of the thoroughbred horses in the world are descended from forty-three mares and five stallions (four of the five being Arabs and one a Barb) breeders who know their business do not think very highly of Arabian blood or any colt that seems to favor that strain. And I think the breeders are right in this, because the only Arab strain in the thor-

oughbred horse is the strain he started with centuries ago and that has been bred out today.

As a two-year-old my sire gave no indication of upholding the speed records of his sire and dam, so it was decided not to bother training him further, although, notwithstanding his bad start as a foal he had developed into an unusually big colt with a fine, wide, square action, and was flawless physically. He was just a slow race horse—exactly what the experts predicted he would be, so the master, knowing the weakness of cattlemen for palomino horses, presented my sire with his compliments, to his friend Ranceford Dane of the Triangle Ranch in Modoc County.

Rance was very glad to own my sire. He wasn't interested in race horses, but he had an idea that colts out of Sir Nigel and some half- and quarter-bred Percheron mares would make him just about the sweetest saddle animals in California. So he made the experiment. As to whether his judgment was good or bad, that is a matter I shall not discuss. Just take a look at me!

(Taffy had to demonstrate his Welsh blood. "You hate yourself, don't you?" he sneered.

("Ye little fat good-for-nothin'," roared O'Malley, "will ye have done with interrupthin' the lad or must I kick manners into ye? D'ye see those white patches on the Prof? 'Tis where shrapnel from a high burrst scored him. We have the Skipper's worrd for that. And have ye not seen his blanket wit' the wound shtripes and the service shtripes on it?

("An' back av that ag'in have ye not seen the glass case full of lovin' cups an' ribbons the Prof has won

at horse shows? Shame on ye, ye gutther-snipe. Let me hear another whinny out of ye and 'tis in the brook I'll half dhrown ye. I'll have no sneerin' in *my* presence at the brave."

(No matter what their faults, it is speeches like this that make people love the O'Malleys of this world. I continued.)

Now, practically all of Sir Nigel's mares were bays or dark dappled browns, and every colt dropped from a dark brown dappled mare was a dark dappled brown —almost a dark red, in fact, with silver mane, foretop and tail. At maturity and in good flesh we all weighed close to twelve hundred pounds and stood between fifteen-six and sixteen hands high.

We had the amiable dispositions of our mothers and their blood gave us our size, while we had the intelligence, spirit, stamina, courage and grace of Sir Nigel. We all had good hoofs and the straight flat bone of the thoroughbred, and our coloring was strikingly unusual. I dare say we were freaks in that detail, but that we were regarded as the handsomest horses in Modoc County there can be no denying.

There was a great demand for us from cowboys but Rance Dane knew what he had and sold us for hunters. Of all Sir Nigel's get I was the only one that ever fell low enough to become a cow-horse. And that was no fault of mine or Rance Dane's.

("Faith, I'll bet a bag av red apples frosted wit' sugar ye brought no discredit upon yourself as a cow-horse," O'Malley declared generously. Like all of his breed O'Malley can be a bad enemy, but once he's your friend he has delightful little ways of showing it.)

I must admit, O'Malley, in the interests of truth (I replied) that your assumption does credit to your judgment of horse nature. I'll let my record and not my own words speak for me. My master Ern Givens, who was foreman of the Alamo Ranch, won first prize with me in the roping contest at the Pendleton Round-up in 1916. And believe me, O'Malley, we weren't roping goats, either. Bulls, my boy—great, two-thousand-pound Hereford bulls!

Roping bulls is one job where a horse of my intelligence and weight is an asset. Any low-bred cayuse can perform rather well on ordinary cow-critters, but when it comes to manhandling a bull a horse has to use the old bean. You know how it's done, don't you? Well, let me explain.

The bull comes out of the chute and they start him across the field with a few cracks of a quirt across his rump. Then you take after him at a nice easy canter. A fellow doesn't have to get excited over bulls. They're too slow to give one a run. You hear the riata swishing over you, but you don't let that worry you either. You know *you're* not going to get banged over the head with it. Thirty feet from *el toro* you feel your master rise in the stirrups a little and then you see his twine go sailing out in front of you.

That's the time you've got to cooperate if you're worth your oats. You watch the loop and as it settles over the bull's head—preferably between his horns—you slow up a little, so the riata will be slack and yet not dragging in the dirt. You feel your master cast his dally over the pommel and then you get busy and circle that bull, sit back on your haunches and give

him the bust—that is, you trip him up. As he's going down, your master leaves the saddle, and runs toward the bull; he has a couple of short ropes in his belt for hog-tying.

Ern Givens used to employ an old Mexican stunt. He'd grab the bull's tail, tie a double knot in the tassel of it, pull the tail between the bull's hind legs, twist it once around the beast's leg and clamp it down between the hoof. The knot would keep it from slipping back, and it only took a second to do this. Then Ern would use one rope to finish the tie-up and Señor El Toro would be lying there helpless before he knew what had happened to him.

As Ern would rise and throw up his arms as a signal to the judges that he was finished, I'd slack up a little so he could cast the loop of his riata off the bull's head. Then the judges would come over to inspect the bull and after that Ern collected his money. It was great sport, O'Malley. We've done the trick in twenty-five seconds.

("Scarcely up to fox-huntin', I'm thinkin', Prof," O'Malley answered. He's a bit opinionated. "However, everyone to his own taste, as the old lady said when she kissed the cow. What else did you excel at?")

I was too tall for Ern to do very good trick riding on, but as a cutting horse I've often heard Ern swear I could read brands and earmarks. Once we went into the corral after a steer and Ern gave me a clear indication of the particular steer he wanted to cut out, that steer might dodge and twist and try to lose himself among a hundred marked exactly like him, but I'd

follow and shoulder him about like a big M. P. hustling a drunken private to the guard-house.

On the round-up other cowboys changed horses daily. They even wore them out. Ern Givens never substituted for me, however. I could do thirty miles a day, up hill and down dale, day in and day out, and beat all hands to the chuck-wagon at night. In all justice, however, I must say that the ordinary cow-ponies had nothing but a bunch-grass ration, while Ern kept oats in the chuck-wagon for me. He could do that, of course, being foreman—that is, being a *good* foreman. I'd drop off in flesh a bit, of course—probably lose a hundred and fifty pounds before we'd get the cattle to the railroad, but I'd come back in a month, thanks to my thoroughbred blood.

I noticed in the campaign in France that even half thoroughbreds—and I'm three-quarters—could stand up under conditions that killed cold-blooded horses as strychnin kills squirrels. They haven't staying ability or the powers of recuperation of the thoroughbred. When they go long periods without water, when rations are cut fifty percent and work increased a hundred, they hang their heads and get low in spirits, and the first thing you know they're down in the traces and you have to cut them out and leave them for the salvage squad.

The battery left me for the salvage squad once, O'Malley, and I thought my heart would break at the disgrace. So I rested a while and then managed to get up on my props and wander away where they couldn't find me. However, I'm anticipating my story and you shall hear all about that incident in due course.

When I was about three months old and fat and frisky from the abundance of milk my dear mother furnished me, a stranger came in on our range. He was a veritable hoodlum—a blue roan stallion with coarse stocky legs and enough hair on his fetlocks to stuff a seventy-five gun from breech-block to muzzle. He was fiddle-headed and old, and I imagine—judging by the scars on his ugly hide—that every stallion in Modoc County had fought him.

What my mother saw in that rake has always been a mystery to me, but at any rate she and six other mares took up with him, and although I pleaded with her to give him the go-by she wouldn't listen to me. He was a wild son of a gun and of course you know what a fascination such fellows have for the gentler sex. He rough-housed any of us that rebelled against his authority and finally he herded us all over a mountain range and into the forest reserve on the other side.

The feed wasn't so good there, either, so we had to hustle to beat four of a kind in order to get any kind of a living, although, as I view the matter now, that rough life was good for me. Climbing steep hills developed my muscles and gave me a good wind. The first thing I knew we were a hundred miles from Rance Dane's headquarters and began meeting up with horses that had never been branded or ridden, in addition to a lot of horses that had, but who had made up their minds to go A. W. O. L. and quit being Joe McGees.

In the spring of the following year my mother handed me a prize package in the shape of a blue roan

half-sister with hairy fetlocks. A cougar got her a week later and I didn't shed any tears at her departure. Of course my mother's milk had dried up some time before, and I had been forcibly weaned. I was too big to nurse her myself and I felt badly to see her suffer by reason of the accumulation of milk, until two days later a little orphan cayuse colt managed to induce her to adopt him.

Our life in that forest reserve wasn't very eventful. Of course we had to be wary of cougars, which would lurk up in trees beside the paths leading down to water and leap down on a foal or a half-grown colt; but as a rule my disreputable stepfather always went first to scout the territory, and generally when a cougar made the mistake of leaping down on one of our party Old Roan and the mares quickly gave him something to think about.

Of course, being a three-quarter thoroughbred, I walked with my head up and used my eyes and nose, so, while I had a few narrow escapes, I always managed to side-step in time. Once I leaped over a windfall and a huge brown bear rose up under my belly and gave me the shock of my life, although the shock he gave me wasn't a marker to the one I gave him. He got out of that country like he'd been sent for and delayed. Honestly, at every jump, his hind feet went so far forward I thought he'd cut his throat with the dew-claws. I learned to avoid rattlesnakes, too, until I discovered I could kill them by rearing up and stamping on them. Usually they tried to bite into my hoofs as I came down on them, but what a joke that was!

("There are no snakes in Ireland," O'Malley ven-

tured to remind me. "St. Patrick drove them all out. However, should I happen on one o' the divils in this counthry, I'll know how to handle him—thanks to you, Professor. Go long wit' yer shtory.")

Finding I could kill snakes that way, I became possessed of a great yearning to try-out on a cougar. I was a two-year-old and it was winter before I found an opportunity. The deer had migrated to the lower levels before the snow commenced to fly, and I imagine this cougar—he was pretty old—was following them when the snow forced him to hole up. He had worked up a pretty good appetite by the time the snow stopped falling and a cold snap froze it hard enough to walk on.

I was jogging down the mountain, looking for places where the snow was thin and I could scrape down to the grass with my hoofs; when I found such a spot I got busy pawing and didn't hear that cougar crunching over the snow. He came up wind on me, too, so I didn't smell him, but fortunately I happened to look up and see him just as he made an up-hill jump at me.

I knew his plan. He hoped to land on my neck while my head was down and bite me through the vertebræ. But I fooled him. I reared instantly and he missed, landing right under me—and bang! blooey! I came down on him and broke his backbone. Then I used him for a door-mat until I was tired and perspiring in spite of the cold, and that was the last of old man cougar.

CHAPTER III

I HAD proceeded thus far in my story when a tickling in my throat warned me that it was time to wet my whistle. That whiff of phosgen gas I got at Cantigny doesn't bother me particularly, although I dare say it would if I should be ridden very hard for a considerable distance. There is a small raw spot down around my larynx, however, and too much talking is apt to bring on a fit of coughing unless I cool that spot with cold water and rest a while. So I walked up the brook to a clear pool and drank very slowly; when I returned to my friends I observed a jovial twinkle in O'Malley's eyes.

"I'm afther thinkin', Professor," he announced, "that we're about to come to the most intherestin' part of your life story—the part where you have the grand ruction wit' your blue roan rascal of a stepfather."

"What makes you think so?" Taffy demanded, always argumentative.

"Bekase, ye runt, no thoroughbred'll shtand for shenanigans from a mucker," O'Malley replied pridefully. "Divil a wan o' the right breedin' will bend his head to oppression an' injustice. I mind I was coming three years old whin a lorry-load av Black an' Tans dhruv up to the farm av Rory McNamara that bred me an' me mother before me, the Lord be his comfortin'.

"Rory had j'ined out wit' the bhoys afther the Easter Rebellion an' for a month he'd been on the run in the Connaught mountains, whilst his young son, the wife and the daughter took care of the farm. But sure the Black an' Tans (bad luck to you, Taffy, 'twas a Welsh Prime Minister of England that sint us those fellas) knew Rory would soon be afther sneakin' back. For why? Bekase his black mare Rosaleen Dhu, that'd won the five hundred guineas at the Curragh av Kildare, had dhropped a colt by Sir Roger de Coverley, the greatest steeple-chaser in all Ireland and him owned by Sir Emmet Flanagan, of Ballinavan, a grrand gintleman who'd given Rory a free service from Sir Roger for the mare Rosaleen.

"Sure 'twas not in human nature that Rory could resist comin' down from the Connaught mountains for a look at Rosaleen Dhu's colt; so sure enough wan dark night come he did, an' the mare bein' took wit' a colic an' Rory misthrustin' the young fellas' skill to bring her t'rough, he stayed all night to nurrse her an' bright an' early in the mornin' here come me brave Black an' Tans an' surround the place entirely. Their officer come up an' hammered at the barn door.

"'Come out o' that, Rory McNamara,' says he. 'Come out, ye rebel, to be hung like the thraitor that ye are an' thank God 'tisn't biled in ile ye are.'

"'Ye talk av threason to me, ye skut,' says Rory. 'Sure, how can a man who neither him nor his people for seven hundhred years have been loyal subjects, be guilty av threason?' An wit' that he fired and kilt the officer dead.

"Whooroo! There was a great fight at that, wit'

Rory jumpin' hither an' yon an' firin' from window an' knot-hole. Sure to seven av thim he gave what Paddy give the dhrum, but whin they set the barn afire he knew he was done in. So he opened the dhure an' dhruv out Rosaleen Dhu an' the foal. At that the Black an' Tans ceased firin', thinkin' 'twas in Rory's mind to surrendher. But divil a wan o' them knew Rory McNamara. I was in me shtall an' a good, shtout gossoon that'd been bitted an' ridden be exercise bhoys. Praise be to God, Rory was a little man—he'd been a jockey wanst—so what does he do but shlip a saddle an' bridle on me, lep on me back an' go chargin' through the blazin' dhure like a bat out o' hell?

"There was a wall around the place an' the Black an' Tans was inside. I ran two av them down an' at a worrd from Rory I took off at that wall. As God is me judge, 'twas me firrst jump an' 'twas too high for me, so I got me front feet up an' jerrked me hind feet afther me an' shtood poised on that wall like a greyhound. Thin I took off the other side an' away we wint, hell for leather, wit' the bullets singin' around us like bees an' Rory talkin' to me in the Gaelic. We were into a bit av woods like that an' I swum the Shannon bekase there was no time to hunt for bridges. Many's the wild ride I've had to hounds since that day but divil a wilder ride nor that, for we were riding wit' telyfome an' telegraph wires rousin' the counthry agin us.

"For all that, Rory aised me down at the thirrd mile, for fear o' wind-breakin' me. An' thin what did the cute fox do? Answer me that. What did he do?

He rode back to the farm, bekase that was the last place on earth they'd think av lookin' for him! The barn was burnt whin we got there, but Rosaleen Dhu an' the foal were in the meadow browsing quietly, so Rory wint over, saw that the mare had done wit' the colic, looked his fill at the colt, kissed me twice on the nose an' turrned me loose wit' the two av thim, whilst afoot he made his way back to the mountains.

"An' whin the fightin' was over he come back an' sold me for a hundhred guineas to the agent of the Commandhin' Officer, an' here I am. 'Tis the broken-hearted Rory he was the last I saw av him. 'Charles O'Malley,' says he to me, as he laid me halter-shank in the agent's hands, ' 'tis guilty of thrason I am at long lasht for sellin' you, an' may God forgive me for it, but I need the money for a new barn. I have Rosaleen Dhu's colt Faugh-a-Ballagh to comfort me, but the like av horse like you will never be seen ag'in in all Ireland.' Sure, the poor man cried like a child."

I looked at little Taffy, the Welshman, and felt sorry for him. Like the men too small to be accepted for service, Taffy has not lived. Not a thrill has he known in all his placid existence, unless it be on those occasions when he polices the Brat, and the time is not far distant when he will be denied even that small delight, for the Brat is a chip of the old block and as often as Taffy polices him he's back in the saddle again. He's coming eight years old in the fall, and with the stiffening of his little leg muscles, what with the flexing exercises the Top is giving him daily, O'Malley and I can see Taffy's finish.

"I don't think I should care to be shot at," said Taffy.

"There's nothin' like love an' fightin'," O'Malley declared. "I left six fine sons and three daughters in the old counthry."

I admitted that I had left a few myself on that Modoc National Forest range, not without pride. In fact, it was my desire to take on family responsibilities that led to the final ruckus with my roan stepfather.

When I was two years old (I said, taking up my story where I had left off) I killed that old cougar, as I have already told you; and following that victory the thought occurred to me that hereafter I would be independent of my stepfather and do the cougar-scouting for our band of mares. Of course Old Roan resented this and took no pains to conceal his dislike for me, and my mother, poor amiable creature, made no effort to oppose him. At first I was weak enough to submit to his arbitrary methods of protest, but eventually the thought came to me: "What reason, if any, exists, why I should take a back seat?"

("None in God's green wurrld," O'Malley assured me. "What happened then?")

We mixed it, of course. I bided my time and picked the battlefield. It was on a hillside and I tackled him from above. The old fool reared, struck and missed, but I did not miss. I rushed in and got him by the throat, crowded him on the point of the shoulder and threw him over backward. He went rolling down the hill, with me striking him every time he tried to get up. Finally when he managed to get up he was very

groggy, so I turned on him and let him have both heels early and often. He was a cold-blooded horse and I believed if I forced the fighting, throwing everything I had at him, he'd quit. I knew—without knowing just why I knew—that I'd only have to whip him once, provided I did a good job then.

Well, young as I was and light as I was, I did it. My footwork was too fast for him, so finally, screaming with rage and despair, he broke off the engagement and limped away over the hill. We never saw him again, and I took charge of the harem and led them for six months until the forest-rangers came in and staged a round-up. They do that every fall after the cattlemen, who have permits to graze their stock in the public domain, have made their round-up. The rangers know, of course, that after the cattle round-up anything still left in the reserve is nobody's property or strayed property, and as such animals have no legal right in the reserve, naturally they have to get out.

I was wilder than a March hare, of course, never having had anything to do with men, but my mares had all been civilized at some period of their existence and I couldn't do a thing with them. I tried to crowd them into making some speed, to lead them in wild dashes through the circle of riders, but I couldn't seem to work up any enthusiasm; so in the end, rather than desert them, I trotted at the head of my harem and presently found myself in a twenty-acre fenced field. I could have jumped that fence and escaped, but the mares refused to follow; so what was the use? I decided to stick around and see what would happen.

What happened was that the rangers rode among us, noting brands and taking descriptions of every head of us. Then the government advertised us as strays for thirty days in one of the county papers and warned all persons who might own any of us, or who could prove ownership, to come and bring us home; otherwise, on a certain day, we would all be sold at auction.

But few of the former owners of members of my harem called to claim them. Horses were too cheap and too plentiful in that country for the owners to go to the expense and bother of riding a hundred miles to lead a horse back another hundred miles, so the majority of my charges were sold for two dollars and fifty cents each to chicken-raisers down in Sonoma County and shipped there by train, to be slaughtered and fed to chickens. Yes, that's what they do with old horses and horses nobody wants, in California.

It was at this auction that I met Ernie Givens. They had driven us into a small circular corral with eight-foot, close-planked walls, and Ern Givens sat on top of this fence and looked us over. My mother recognized him and told me who he was.

"There he is," I heard Ern Givens shout suddenly to the chief ranger. "That's the horse I'm looking for. I thought, when I read his description in the advertisement—dark brown, dappled, with silver points, that he might be one of the Triangle colts, because no horses were ever marked like them before. I wonder if there's a Triangle mare in this lot—a quarter- or half-bred Percheron. If there is one such she should be a dappled brown but not quite as brown as this stallion. He's almost a rich mahogany color."

The ranger called to a rider in the corral to mill us around and presently my mother trotted past the man on the fence. He pointed to her. "Put your rope on that mare and lead her up here till I look for a brand," he requested, and this was done.

"Yes, she's the Triangle mare I suspected might be here. I'll bet a hat she's the dam of that young stallion."

They auctioned my mother off then and there while they had a rope on her. The chicken-feed man bid two dollars and a half. Ern Givens looked my mother over, walked up and examined her teeth. "About seven years old," I heard him say, "and too fine a mare to be fed to chickens. She's in foal, too. Three dollars," he called to the auctioneer, and I was so grateful to him I came up close, stretched out my neck and sniffed at him.

"Hello, boy," he said, and I liked the way he said it. He stretched his hand out to me, wiggling his fingers and snapping them a little. I saw he meant no harm, so I came up and smelled his hand.

"He's just like all of them," I heard him say to the rider that was holding my mother. "Sensible and courageous. I've never known an outlaw of this breeding. I'll gentle him as easily as I would a pet pig. Three-fifty for the Triangle mare."

"Four," the chicken-feed buyer challenged.

"Five," says Ern Givens. "Better let me have her, bud. She'll cost you five dollars to freight to the slaughter pen, and ten dollars is as high as any chicken fancier can afford to go for horse meat."

"Take her," the chicken man called, disgusted. I

suppose he knew Ern Givens was bound to have her anyhow.

Ern Givens bought two more horses—likely-looking animals, even if cold-blooded. They had old saddle chafes on their withers, and wore a brand, so he knew they had once earned their oats as cow-ponies.

Finally I was alone in the corral with mother and these two cow-ponies, so the auctioneer started them to bidding on me. Ern Givens sat silent on the fence, making no bids, letting his competitors run up the price, and I have often thought that was sensible of him. Why should he run up the price on himself? At forty dollars one of the forest-rangers appeared to be about to bid me in, but just then Ern Givens came to life.

"Fifty," he said.

"You mean to have him, Givens?" the forest-ranger asked him. "I'd like mighty well to own that animal myself, but—"

"I mean to have him if I have to bid two hundred and fifty dollars for him. And I might even beat that, ranger."

"I'll be neighborly," the ranger replied. "I'll bid seventy-five but that's my limit."

"Seventy-six," Ern Givens yells, and as there were no other bids, and after the auctioneer had begged and pleaded and given warning three times, I passed into the hands of Ernie Givens for seventy-six dollars.

"You should feel complimented, son," said my mother. "That man knows horses. What's more, he appreciates a good horse and will treat us kindly. He spoke a moment ago of gentling you. A common cow-

puncher would have spoken of busting you. There's a difference. Now, take a tip from your worldly-wise mother, son, and the first time that man saddles you and climbs aboard, don't you get the notion in your young head that you can dump him, because you can't. As a bucker you'll be a fizzle, because it doesn't run in your blood to be a bucker. The crazier a horse is the better bucker he is, so if you want to advertise yourself as a lunatic just buck like a fool.

"I know that man. He used to be a top rider for the Triangle, and there hasn't been a rider on the Triangle since Sir Nigel's foals began to be dropped who hasn't dreamed of owning one of them. When Ern Givens read your description in that advertisement he was smart enough to realize that here, at last, was a chance to possess one of Sir Nigel's get at a price within his means. You belong to Ern Givens now, son, and so do I, and presently he'll give us the names we are to answer to."

"I shall not forget, mother," I replied, "that he saved you from being chicken-feed."

"I hope I shall bear him good colts," said my mother. "The next one will be another blue roan, I dare say," she added sadly. "Something tells me my next born will not be popular with Ern Givens."

She was right. When he was born Ern looked him over and shook his head; when the little fellow was weaned Ern gave him to old Chief Sassy Jack, of the Modoc tribe, and I think the Indians ate him. I should worry.

CHAPTER IV

WELL, the day following the auction Ern Givens came into the corral where my dam and the other two broncs and I were nibbling some mighty indifferent hay out of a rack. I had never eaten hay before and didn't like it; indeed I wouldn't have touched it if I hadn't been hungry as a bear in the spring. Ern had a basket filled with round red objects the odor of which was extraordinarily pleasant, and almost immediately I began to water at the mouth.

He gave my worthy mother one which she munched with such evident pleasure that the two cow-ponies came up and begged for a helping. So Ern gave each of them one and threw in a few friendly strokes on the nose for good luck. He didn't pay a bit of attention to me, however, and I felt a little hurt—particularly when he walked over to the other side of the corral and invited mother and the two cow-ponies to follow him.

O'Malley, he didn't *have* to ask them. They would have followed him while he had those round red things in the basket. I couldn't get the delightful odor of them out of my nostrils, although I snorted and tossed my head a good deal, so finally I asked mother what the good thing was.

"Apples," she replied. "Hood River, Oregon apples. Lordy, but they're good! I haven't tasted an apple for

three years. I tell you, boy, being a free horse has its decided disadvantages. Come to think of it I don't suppose I ever will know what possessed me to go philandering off with that blue roan ruin you kicked out of the party some time back. Don't be silly, son. Horn in on the play and show some interest. If you want anything in this world you have to work for it or ask for it or help yourself to it."

So I came over timidly and as Ern was slipping some more apples to those cow-ponies I stuck my head over his shoulder and helped myself to one out of the basket. Ern didn't seem to mind; so I backed away a few feet and ate it. *Carajo!* (as my dear departed comrade Tip used to say—he'd soldiered in Porto Rico, Cuba, the Canal Zone and the Philippines and always cussed in Spanish) that apple was good. I came back for another, but this time Ern switched the cut on me. He held out his hand, palm up and it was covered with a white powder.

"Lick it up, fool," said one of the cow-ponies. "It's salt."

I licked it up off his hand. *Caramba,* it was good. It seemed to provide something I'd always felt the lack of, so I went back for more. Before Ern would oblige me, however, I had to let his hand rest on my muzzle, and then he fed me an apple with his other hand, while his first hand crept up my jaw and finally I felt his fingers working in around the bases of my ears. I had a tick in there and he dislodged the brute. Then his hand roved down over my neck and across my withers, so, seeing he was forgetting all about the apples, I helped myself to the basket and was called

a greedy dog by both broncs. In fact, there was some small talk among them of the advisability of ganging me. Hell's fire! They made me laugh. Mother and I finished the apples and all those two broncs could do was stand off and cuss. Later Ern made it up to them by giving them quite a lot of salt.

In about an hour Ern brought saddle, bridle and blanket into the corral, roped one of the broncs, saddled and forked him. The bronc went high, wide and handsome with him once around the corral and then quit.

"No use trying to do my stuff with that boy up," he grinned as he passed my mother as meek as a sheep-killing dog. Ern then saddled and rode the other bronc, who gave him quite a party, but ended up by being reasonable too.

"Each one is hoping Ern will think he is unsafe and ride the other one," my mother told me.

(Charles O'Malley rolled a roguish eye at me. "Your mother must have had a dash of Irish hunter in her, Prof," he declared. "That line she gave you last sounds like an Irish bull."

(I laughed. O'Malley has a delicious sense of humor.)

CHAPTER V

HE'LL not bother to give me a rehearsal," said my mother. "He knows I'm not a regular saddle animal, that my function is bringing colts into the world. But he'll ride you, my son, and you might as well brace yourself for the shock. That Ern is just bursting with curiosity as to how you'll stack up for a wild horse. He's got to prove that his estimate of you is right—he's got to prove that you're out of Sir Nigel and me, and if you don't sprawl yourself all over this corral when he tops you, that'll be all the proof he'll want. After that, he'll leave you alone and treat you well until you've got some more age on you."

She was right. Ern tied me to a snubbing post and gave me five minutes to see if I could pull the dog-goned thing up by the roots. When I quit he gave me some salt and another apple and the first thing I knew he had lifted up my front foot. I figured if I stood for it I'd get another apple, and the result was that, when I got tired standing on three feet and decided to set that foot on the ground, I couldn't! Ern had tied it up! However, he gave me some more salt on the palm of his hand and then he slipped a *jáquima* over my head. He had more sense than to try to bit me then and there.

Next he cinched his saddle on me. We had quite

a fight about that and I tried to strike at him a few times, but he didn't seem to mind. Just stood off at the end of the latigo and pulled on it and of course, standing on three feet as I was, my attempts to stand on two long enough to reach him with the third were perfectly ridiculous. Mother stood by laughing at me and even the broncs snickered.

The last thing Ern did was to blindfold me, and of course as soon as I found myself in darkness I stood still and wondered what to do. I couldn't see that Ern had untied me and gathered up the hitching-rope with the *jáquima* reins. Suddenly my foot was loose and I stamped it. Then Ern was on my back, the blindfold was flipped off and I gave a terrific jump.

"Steady, you young fool," said my mother. However, youth must be served and of course I figured I could do a better bucking job than either of those two snickering cow-ponies. So I tried, but after a minute of my best bucks I could feel Ern's hand down on my neck, stroking it, and I could hear Ern's voice saying, "Steady, little hoss, steady. Don't you start to get riled with papa. You know you got more sense than that."

I was quite out of breath and disappointed, so I started to run. Ern let me. I tore around the corral about a dozen times, then suddenly I stopped and pitched again—just once, for luck!

"I thought you'd try that at least once," I heard Ern say; and then one of the cow-ponies bawled me out.

He said: "Oh, for the love of alfalfa, quit making a spectacle of yourself. That man started life at fifteen

as a bronco squeezer and you're just duck soup for him, with your feeble, amateurish crow-hopping and wild galloping. Don't act like a wild ass."

I saw there was an element of wisdom in what he said, so I settled down and trotted around the corral, keeping close to the fence and doing my best to scrape Ern's leg off against it. But he just laughed and cocked his leg up along my shoulder and all of a sudden he jumped down and grabbed me by the head and shoved an apple against my lips. I said to mother:

"Shucks! What can you do with a fellow who treats you like that? It takes two to make a quarrel."

Ern took the saddle and *jáquima* off me then, and turned me loose. The ranger had been watching him from the top of the corral. "He's as good as broken right now," I heard Ern say. "Nothing technical about that horse. He has his daddy's courage and spirit, but his common sense and lack of temper come from that brown mare. I'll teach him to lead this afternoon and tomorrow morning I'll saddle one of these delinquent cow-ponies and we'll drag out of here."

"Where do you hail from, mister?" says the ranger.

"I'm foreman of the Alamo Ranch, over in Shasta Valley, in Siskiyou County," says Ern. "The boss told me to pick up a good, heavy, sensible horse for him—one he can safely put fat buyers on when they come to the ranch and want to ride down in the fields to look at the cattle. This brown mare will be just the ticket for that. These other horses will go into my own private string. I'll geld this stallion after I get him home and next spring start his education."

"He's the most gorgeous thing on four legs I ever did see," says the ranger. "If some rich city feller should take a fancy to that animal and you had him well schooled I wouldn't be surprised if mebbe you could get a thousand dollars for him."

"I wouldn't sell this horse for five thousand," says Ern. "You wait until I've trimmed his hoofs and shod him, combed the cockleburs and ticks off'n him, groomed him and fed him up right, and there'll only be one man in this country fit to ride him in a parade—and that'll be Theodore Roosevelt."

That afternoon Ern Givens taught me to lead and the following day he tied mother, one of the broncs and me together, with me in the center. Then he mounted upon the other bronc and away we went over the hills and across the plains down into Siskiyou County. And by and by we came to the Alamo Ranch. That's where life really started for me. But my throat is getting ticklish again, so if you'll excuse me, O'Malley—and you, Taffy—I'll lay off on my yarn until this afternoon. That gas I picked up at Cantigny sticks to me like the tail end of a hard, cold spring.

CHAPTER VI

THE following morning Taffy, the Welsh pony, Charles O'Malley, the Irish hunter, and I grazed for an hour after Enrico hazed us out into the meadow. Enrico, like most Mexicans, has a theory that when a horse isn't actively earning his board and lodging he should be made to rustle his own living, so that morning he had turned us out without our customary bran mash.

"If I didn't know the Top will get on to that rascal Enrico and bust him before long," I assured O'Malley, "I'd get rid of him myself. My old comrade in arms Tip, the mule I told you about yesterday, had a theory that a man like Enrico shouldn't complain if some neglected horse or mule puts him on sick report with a good kick, well placed."

"He gives me my exercise, remember, when the Top is home," O'Malley reminded me. "What a picnic I'll give that laddy-buck the next time we're out together!"

"You two big noises talk a lot, but I'm the boy that does things," Taffy reminded us. "I bit Enrico this morning."

"Ye did, ye little skut, and ye had the poor sinse to do it whilst shtill tied in your shtall. 'Tis the fine dhressin' down Enrico gave ye for it, ye runt." Thus did O'Malley silence Taffy.

By the time we had grazed a couple of hours we all felt in better humor, so about noon we went over to the brook and had a drink. It was nice and shady under the weeping willow trees, so while our feed was digesting O'Malley suggested that I renew my story, which accordingly I did.

"Where was I when I quit yesterday?" I inquired.

"With Ern Givens, your mother Nellie and the two cow-ponies at the Alamo Ranch."

So I was. (I resumed.) Well, we got in about sundown. Ern gave us a drink and turned us into a corral with a feed rack in it filled with the best hay I have ever eaten anywhere. It was timothy, Kentucky blue grass and sweet clover—well cured and not a sprig of fox-tail or mustard in it. (Many a time I thought of that hay in France.) Then Ern went off to feed himself.

After supper he came back with the boss, whose name was Dean Duke. Dean was a much older man than Ern, but he had a youthful way about him, and I liked him on sight. He liked me, too, because he came right up with his hand out, snapping his fingers at me to show he was friendly. I let him rub my nose, and the first thing I knew his hand had slipped down on my foreleg and he was feeling it thoughtfully.

"Hot blood in this baby, Ern," he said. "He has a fine flat bone, good strong fetlocks and fine hoofs. He stands right up on them, too. Large ears, wide apart and well forward; broad between the eyes and his eyes are kind. Lordy me, little horse, I wish some eastern magazine illustrator could have you for a

model. He'd know what a horse's head really looks like after he saw you. Mostly a fellow can't tell whether they've painted a horse or a moose." He stood off and admired me, then walked around me, making little clicking sounds with his tongue.

Ern Givens watched his boss. He was smiling a little. "What'll you give me for him, Mr. Duke?"

"Ern," the boss replied, "if you were to sell me that horse at any price I'd suspect there was something wrong with your morals and feel inclined to count all the calves on the ranch again to make sure we still have 'em. If I were as young as I used to be, with beef worth ten cents, and this colt going at auction, I'd like to see the photograph of the man who would outbid me. But I wouldn't buy him from you at any price now. If you need some money real bad I'll let you have what you want without interest, but I'll be dog-goned if I'll be inhuman enough to trade you out of this colt."

Ern looked embarrassed. It was easy to see his boss thought a lot of him. "Here's his ma," says Ern, going over to my mother. "She's a fine mare, big, but active and light on her feet. She'll cost you ten dollars."

The boss gave Ern the ten dollars, and they looked at the broncs, but without enthusiasm. Then they came back to me. "We must never let this colt run in a field fenced with barbed wire," the boss told Ern. "I wouldn't see that hide of his scarred for a thousand dollars. We'll build a box stall for him, Ern, and treat him like folks. Throw the feed into him, boy, and build him up. He's worth it."

They did. Ern gelded me and branded me with

a small G on my neck up under the mane. He was very careful to make a light brand and it didn't hurt much, but he had to throw me to do the job right. In two weeks I was as right as a fox. Ern fed and watered and groomed me himself and he seldom came into my stall without some biscuits or an apple or a lump of sugar. And he never struck me. It was always a kind word before he entered the stall, so he wouldn't surprise and frighten me. Then he'd pet me and talk to me and rub me between the ears and between the forelegs and around the root of my tail. He seemed to know just the spots where a horse itches. He got all the ticks out of me promptly, but it took him quite a while to get the dirt out of my hide.

The boss let him fence off about three acres of meadow for me with boards and posts, and Ern also built me a frame shack open on one side and with a roof made of brush, to keep the snow off me in winter and the sun in summer, for he knew a horse requires exercise and he'd never let me stay in my stall during the day, no matter what the weather.

In the spring he clipped me and trimmed up my tail around the root, but he would never roach my mane or foretop. He said he liked that flaxen bang coming down under the brow-band of the bridle, for of course he'd bitted me by now. Also he used to saddle me and run me around at the end of a long rope.

When I was three years old he rode me a few times himself and as I had more sense and not enough ingratitude to buck, he didn't ride me any more. He knew he was too heavy for a horse as young as I, so he told the bronco-twister to ride me daily.

The bronco-twister, a boy named Henry, was eighteen years old and only weighed about a hundred and twenty-five pounds. Henry had light hands and a decent way about him and he taught me to rein; and in the fall, when I was coming four years old, I went on the round-up, and Henry used me to herd in the remuda. It was light work, but I learned a lot at it. The good care and the fine forage Ern gave me had kept me coming right along; I'd filled out and was fifteen and a half hands high by this time and still growing. Henry had to rope horses considerably, and I learned not to be afraid when I heard the riata swishing around my ears.

In the spring Ern took me away from Henry, and Henry cried. From then on Ern rode me, and I didn't mind his weight at all now. My first experience in roping cows was in the branding corral, but I soon found I could drag a six- or eight-months-old calf up to the fire and hold him while they branded him. A few weeks later we steered them and a few weeks after that we dehorned them and inoculated them against black-leg. Dean Duke never gave a calf all that misery at once. He said it was too great a shock for a calf and set him back in his growth. If I do say so myself I developed rapidly into an A-1 roping horse and during the fall round-up I learned to be a cutting horse.

When I was five years old Ern put me in a truck and took me down to the railroad. There I was put in a stock car, and Ern and Henry and I went to the Pendleton Round-up, where Henry won a hundred dollars riding disrespectful horses, and Ern was

crowned king of the ropers. That's where I roped my first bull. I won a hundred dollars, too, as the handsomest horse in the big parade just before the round-up started. I'm here to tell you we had a hell of a time at Pendleton, and Ern was offered big prices for me times without number.

Henry had won also a beautiful silver-mounted saddle and bridle, but the little fool got in a poker game and lost it. So Ern went in to win it back, and before morning he had me in the pot. But I guess Ern knew what he was about, for when he got through with those other cowboys, he had me and the saddle and a hatful of money out again. He was weak after the operation, though, and felt ashamed of himself, for he came over to the corrals to me and put his arms about my neck and called himself a dirty dog and promised me he'd never do it again.

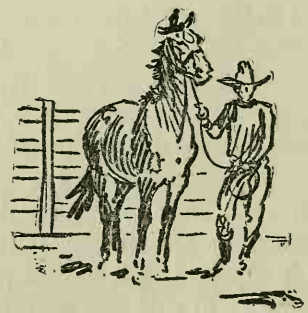
Ern gave Henry back the saddle and bridle and lectured him about indulging in poker games with wicked cowboys—at his tender age. It was a beautiful outfit and I looked well in it, but Ern said it was too heavy and too high-toned to use working cattle, and besides, if a horse should roll with that saddle and break it up he'd never get over it—I mean Ern, not the horse—so he told Henry to take it and use it for Fourth of July parades and such.

Well, when we got back to the ranch the boss was worried. It seems the United States had gotten into the Great War in April, and it looked now as if there was going to be more to this war than talk. Three of the hands had drawn their time and enlisted and the problem of labor was beginning to bother Dean.

"I wouldn't worry if I were you," Ern told him. "Most cowboys are flat-footed. They have ridden all their lives, and their walking muscles are weak. Those that aren't flat-footed have had their ankles broken a couple of times on account of horses rolling on them, so I reckon there'll never be a great scarcity of cowboys on account of the war. The army will reject them. However, boss, while we're on this subject of war, I reckon it's only fair I should give you warning I'm neither flat-footed nor crippled and while I don't crave to be a hero, I reckon it's up to me to go before they send for me."

"My Lord," wails the boss, "whatever will I do without you, Ern?"

"War is hell," says Ern Givens solemnly. "I'll stay as long as I can to give you time to get a man to take my place, but after that I reckon I'll have to be moseying along."



CHAPTER VII

WELL, a couple of weeks later we had to ship five carloads of pure-bred Hereford bulls to a customer and Ern rode me down to the railroad with the drive. There was only a small corral there, and we had to hold the bunch on some flat ground a little back from the station, cut them out in carload lots and herd them into the corral. From the corral they went up the loading chute into the cars.

While we were fussing with them a passenger train pulled in and stayed there so long Ern got curious and rode over to see what the matter was. It seems one of the cars had a hot box, and the crew were trying to fix it. Pretty soon the passengers drifted out, and immediately two of them became interested in Ern and me. One was a girl in a blue uniform (I learned later that she was an army nurse) and the other was the man we now know as the Skipper—

("Was the girl in the blue uniform the lady we now know as the Commanding Officer?" O'Malley interrupted.)

You've guessed it, O'Malley, although at this time the Skipper and the Commanding Officer didn't even know each other. In a manner of speaking I brought them together. The Skipper wasn't a captain then—just a shave-tail. Well, the instant he saw Ern and me he came up and said: "Hello there, my friend.

Speaking of horse-flesh reminds me that I'm never going to be happy again as long as I live, because you own that horse."

Ern smiled. He liked all men who liked his horse. "Yes, sir," he said, "the Professor's not so bad." He gave me the signal to shake hands, so I lifted my front leg and offered it to the army officer, who shook it kindly. Then I stood up on my hind legs and walked half a dozen steps and made believe I was going to buck Ern off. (We used to play around together a lot in those days.)

Seeing the free show, the girl in the blue uniform came up to pet my nose. So Ern gave me a touch of the spur and reined me and said, "Professor, where are your manners? Bow to the lady."

So I got down on my knees and bowed to her and she said, "You gorgeous creature!"

"Yes, ma'am," says Ern, "he's certainly gorgeous. A child could ride him, too. When I remember I've got to go away to the war right soon and part with the Professor I get downhearted."

"Oh, well, you'll probably come back to him, cowboy," says the girl.

"The trouble is," says Ern, "after I quit my job the Professor and I won't have any more home than a pair of rabbits. I'll be worried about him all the time I'm in the army."

"If you care to sell him I'll buy him," says the officer. "And with this agreement," he added: "You name a fair price for this horse now and I'll pay it, on a written agreement that if you return from the war and want your horse back you can have him by repay-

ing the purchase price. If you don't come back I am to keep the horse. He'll have a good home and good care in the army with me."

"You kind o' crazy about my horse?" says Ern.

"You know I am. I'm a field artilleryman—light artillery. I know horses and appreciate good ones. Some day I'll have a battery—and what a charger the Professor would be to walk at the head of my command!"

"I won't sell him, sir," says Ern, "but I tell you what I'll do. I've got to go into the army and I want to go where there's horses. So the field artillery will suit me fine. Now, if you take me in your battery I'll come and I'll bring my horse with me—"

"Enlisted men are not permitted to own their own mounts, my friend."

"Well, I've got to have my horse around where I can look after him until we go to France," says Ern. "We can keep him around us, can't we, if we represent him as your horse? I'll let you use him all the time, except maybe once in a while, say on Sunday, when I'd like to have a little visit with him. How does that proposition strike you?"

"Sold!" said the Skipper, although as I said before he was only a shave-tail then. "I'm ordered to Camp Doniphan, in Oklahoma. Here's my card. Are you certain you can pass the physical examination to get into the army?"

"Yes, sir. I took the examination over in Pendleton, Oregon, last month, just to see if I could pass it."

"Then you get to a recruiting office and enlist immediately, Mr.—"

"Ern Givens is my name, Lieutenant Burwell."

"Because pretty soon they're going to stop voluntary enlistments. After that you'll be drafted and have to go wherever you're sent. If you volunteer you can pick your own outfit. Mine will be the ——th Field Artillery, Camp Doniphan, Oklahoma."

Ern wrote it all down on a card.

"It will cost about a hundred and fifty dollars to ship that horse," Lieutenant Burwell continued. "He'll have to be expressed and he ought to have a man to accompany him. I can't stick you for that expense, but, confound it, I haven't got that much money on me, Mr. Givens."

"I'll take your check," says Ern.

"But, my dear man, you've never seen me before."

Ern smiled. "You got a man's face, Lieutenant. I'll take a chance on you."

When he said this the girl laughed and the lieutenant, noticing her now, I think, for the first time (he'd never taken his eyes off me), looked at her and laughed, too, and saluted her.

"I'm ordered to the hospital at Fort Sill, Mr. Burwell," she said. "That's right alongside Camp Doniphan. I'll put up the money for you, on one condition, and that is that some day when I'm off duty I be permitted to ride the Professor."

Have you ever noticed how fast horse and dog people get acquainted with each other? One minute we were all strangers; the next it seemed as if Ern and the army nurse and Lieutenant Burwell had known each other for years. Of course Ern wouldn't take the lady's money, and the officer wouldn't borrow from a lady

either, and while they were arguing about it the conductor yelled, "All aboard," and he had to hurry aboard and leave the deal all up in the air. It was a funny mix-up.

Well, Ern and I went back to those bulls and loaded them and rode home with the rest of the boys. That night Ern quit his job, and Dean Duke gave him his money and his blessing; the next day Ern rode me down to the railroad and loaded me in an express car and climbed in with me. It seems he'd telephoned the station agent for that car the day before and when it arrived it was all ready for my reception, even to a bale of hay and a sack of oats and a barrel of water. We hooked on to a passenger train and four days later pulled in to Camp Doniphan and Ern led me out on the station platform and made me hop off. Ern had his blankets and slept in the hay.

Lieutenant Burwell and the army nurse were there, so I suppose Ern had telegraphed ahead. The lieutenant introduced the lady as Miss Mary Vardon, and I noticed she was wearing a riding costume. The lieutenant slipped a funny bridle on me—it had two bits and two pairs of leather reins—and then he put on me a saddle that felt very comfortable on my back but which really was an insult to an old cow-hand like myself. It was as flat as a pancake and only weighed about twelve pounds.

"He stood the trip well, Givens," says the lieutenant. "Any shipping sickness?"

"Not a bit, sir. Riding in motor-trucks and cattle trains is an old experience for the Professor. He's full of pep and vinegar and wild for exercise."

The lieutenant gave Miss Vardon his hand to put her left foot into and she popped into the saddle. Then the lieutenant fixed the stirrup straps for her and she said, "Well, let's go!"

She brought me around back of the station and there were two army horses with McClellan saddles on them. The lieutenant and Ern mounted them, and all three of us jogged away to Camp Doniphan. That is, the others did, but Miss Mary and I did not. We cut up some capers and galloped ahead, because after that long ride I just naturally had to shake the kinks out of my muscles.

"How do you like him, miss?" Ern asked when she rode back to join them.

She told him I was a darling.

Well, a soldier came and took Ern's horse, and the lieutenant and Miss Mary went off by themselves, while another soldier came and took Ern somewhere. We went back to Fort Sill, and Miss Mary left us, and the lieutenant led me back to Doniphan. Here two soldiers were down at the stables waiting for us—and one of them was Ern Givens.

"So you got through all right, did you, Private Givens?" says the lieutenant, and I was surprised at his voice. It had changed. It wasn't a bit more friendly than it used to be but more formal, more like he was talking to a man he didn't care to know any better than he knew Ern right then.

"Yes, sir," says Ern—and his voice had changed, too. He seemed embarrassed.

When he came up to take the saddle and bridle off me the lieutenant said to him in a low voice, "Have you told anybody this is your horse, Private Givens?"

"No, sir."

"Don't. The other men would think you were boot-licking me by loaning me your wonderful horse. You're a brick, Givens."

"I suppose you thought, when the train pulled out that day, you'd seen the last of me, eh, sir?"

"No, I did not."

"Thanks, sir. Did the lady enjoy the Professor?"

"She did. The lady is—er—very devastating, Givens, so I'm afraid you'll have to get accustomed to seeing her on the Professor. She has a habit of having her own way, it seems."

"She's a lady and a sport," said Ern, "and she wears the uniform. Whatever she wants is an order for me, sir."

Another soldier approached, and the lieutenant introduced Private Givens to him as Stable Sergeant Rogan.

("Hah!" O'Malley spoke up. "Rogan! Irish, I'll be bound, and probably born in a box stall. The Irish are horsemen, Professor.")

This Rogan seemed as much at ease in the lieutenant's presence as in mine (I continued). He nodded to Ern and began inspecting me. And *that* was an inspection! His hands were here, there, everywhere, stroking, feeling, pressing.

"May God help the poor colonel, sor," he said presently. "Sure he'll have a fit at the sight of a sicond lootenant gallivantin' around on the back of a horse fit for Gineral Pershing himself, an' divil a worrd o' lie in that. God forbid he'd be a governmint horse, sir, for if he is, the lootinant'll be ranked out of him as sure as pussy is a cat."

"The horse," said Lieutenant Burwell, "has been loaned to me by a friend who is unable to use him for the present. Private Givens here is an excellent horseman, Sergeant Rogan. I knew him in civil life. I desire that he shall hereafter look after this horse for me. I'll speak to the captain about it and I'm sure he'll have no objection."

"Private Givens'll be afther lookin' afther the lootinant's mount, will he? Faith then, 'tis Stable Sergeant Rogan that'll be afther lookin' afther Private Givens. Look here, rook," he added, turning to my dear master, "I'm none of yer war-time sogers, so I'm not. I'm wan of the last of a fast-disappearin' tribe that was raised on button-shticks an' metal polish whin the army was an army! I've been a stable sergeant since 1901, and I'll have no shenanigans among me stable police; so like the good man I'll make out of ye yet, wit' all yer faults, see to it that ye treat this animal as ye would a child of yer own."

He walked around to my head and opened my mouth to look at my teeth and see how old I was. That was like Stable Sergeant Rogan. He took no man's word for anything. Lieutenant Burwell winked at Ern Givens. "Rogan's bark is worse than his bite," I heard him whisper. "That old warrior is a grand piece of work. You'll like him immensely."

Ern nodded. I knew he'd like Rogan, because Rogan liked me and I liked Rogan. Subsequently I learned that everybody, whether in tents or on the picket-line, liked Rogan. He had been in the service so long that general officers he had served with as second lieutenants were always meeting up with him

and hailing him in a way they never employed toward other soldiers. Once I saw the artillery brigadier shake hands with him—and you know that isn't done very often with enlisted men. I suppose the brigadier made an exception in Rogan's case because of the fact that Rogan was an institution.

It was very amusing to hear Rogan and that brigadier discussing the brigade as if they owned it together. Rogan was always storming around the stables, suspecting the worst and looking for it, but nobody seemed to pay much attention to him—probably because they soon discovered that Rogan was a dear fraud who loved to coddle to himself the fiction that he was a very devil of a fellow because he had to be, and that everybody hated and feared him and he didn't care two hoots in a hollow what they thought.

Dear old Stable Sergeant Rogan! You shall learn what a true friend to me he developed into in the days that followed and what a gallant, thoughtful, wonderful, hard-boiled old warrior he was. The last I saw of him, he and old Tip were lying very quietly together by the side of the road to Grandcourt— However, that part of my tale can wait.

Stable Sergeant Rogan ordered Ern to remove my saddle and bridle and walk me up and down for fifteen minutes to cool me out. The bridle he gave to another stable police to wash and polish and the saddle he hung up on a peg in the harness-room, where he had his own cot. He wasn't supposed to sleep there—in fact, for some reason or other it was against orders. However, Stable Sergeant Rogan was such a capable, experienced and well-disciplined soldier that he never

hesitated to disobey an order if it got in his way, for he feared no man, not even the captain. He'd talk up like a free soul to the commanding general for while he respected rank he wasn't at all in awe of it. I remember the day the captain told him he'd have to sleep in his tent and be present to maintain law and order among his section o' nights.

"I have coprils in my section, sir," Rogan retorted briskly. "If they can't maintain law an' ordher whin me back's turned, then I'm thinkin' the captain has lost his ability to pick good non-commissioned officers. Who the divil will maintain law an' ordher in the stables if not the stable sergeant? What if we should have a fire? Would the captain have me wait until a shleepy guard discovhered it? I'm gettin' old, sir. I must have a bit of privacy, and the harness-room affords it."

"See here, Sergeant Rogan," said the captain at that, "there's a general order forbidding the maintenance of dogs in this division—and yet you maintain a dog in this harness-room with you."

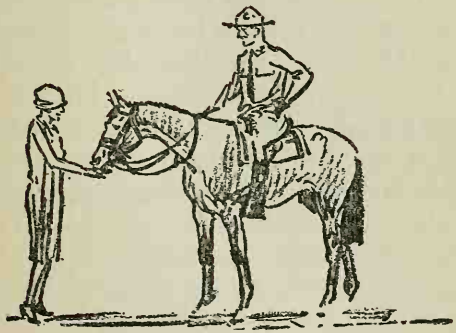
"Oh, sure, sir," Rogan replied, "that's just some damned nonsinse of the sanithary inspecthor. In the ould days we all had dogs and did they sicken us? They did not! A soger must have a dog to keep him from goin' to hell entirely."

"I've overlooked your dog officially, but you must see that he doesn't bark and betray his presence."

"I'll promise ye that, sor," says Rogan with a wide grin. "Sure the brigadier was up only this mornin' to borrow him from me for a week-end shootin' trip. And the division commandher has sent his aide over

to ask can he have me dog for the week-end following. Ha, ha!" Rogan laughed derisively. "The divil fly away wit' that sanithary inspecthor, wit' his new-fangled notions of health. I've been too long in the service to let that laddy-buck take away me privileges."

That ended the argument and Rogan and his setter dog, Jeff, continued to occupy the harness-room.



CHAPTER VIII

WHEN I had cooled out Rogan told Ern to tie me on the picket-line and wipe me off with a salt-sack which he gave Ern. Then he and Ern went away to stand retreat. Sergeant Rogan and his detail of stable police were not required by the captain to be present at retreat roll-call, but Rogan felt they might all get slack if he availed himself of the privilege. Indeed, slackness was the bugaboo of Rogan's life.

Now, since the day Ern Givens had bought me at that Forest Service auction I had always been a one-man horse. My master was all in all to me and I never bothered to scrape up friendships with other horses. The picket-line was filled with horses, and none of them looked like the sort I cared to get acquainted with, for so far as I could see they were mostly coarse draft animals. So I stood there, drowsing in the sun, until aroused by an insolent shove from the right. It almost upset me, and as soon as I could recover my balance I whirled and lashed out with both hind legs.

I failed to connect with anything, so I backed the length of the halter-shank and let fly twice more. Still I merely kicked holes in the air. So I faced about to see what I was up against and there was a bunchy little pack-mule standing parallel with the picket-line and laughing at me. He was as slick as a mouse, coal black, and with a handsome "mealy" nose.

"Easy, rook, easy," he brayed. "Cut out the rough stuff. It isn't allowed on the picket-line, you know. You're in the army now. You're not behind the plow —so reserve your grouch until we're turned loose together in the corral."

"What do you mean by shoving me?" I neighed.

He brayed pleasurably. "Well, to tell the truth, old son," he replied, "I really didn't mean to be offensive. You're such a lovely thing, darling, so dainty and aristocratic, like you'd just popped out of a horse show, that I decided to find out whether or not you're half the Nancy you look. Well, I've found out. You've got plenty of pluck and spirit, and I had to jump fast to keep from being on the receiving end of your kicks. Come, fella, snap out of your peeve, and let's be friends. I'll not try any more tricks on you."

"If you do I'll make you hard to catch, Brother Mule," I replied.

He cocked up his ears and his eyes flashed angrily. "Aren't you going to accept my apology and explanation?" he demanded. "If you aren't, then I intended an insult and what are you going to do about it?"

"Tip," yelled another pack-mule, "shut up. You're getting too old to be taking on the young fellows, and that flaxen-haired, dappled dandy is no set-up for any mule. Lay off the war talk and welcome him to the battery."

"He's welcome enough," said Tip, "but I'm too old a soldier to stand for a call-down from the latest arrived recruit."

"Well, how old a soldier are you, mule?" I inquired.

"I really don't know," Tip replied, "but I was in

my prime when the Missouri farmer that raised me sold me to the army. I swum ashore from the transport at Daiquiri, Cuba, in 1898—and that's nineteen years ago. I suppose I'm about twenty-five years old."

"Well, you're too old for me to pick on," I replied magnanimously. "I've whipped horses that would walk around you like a cooper around a barrel. I'm no riding-academy graduate, I'll have you know. I'm range-raised, and any animal on this picket-line that wants to find out whether I'm a Nancy horse or not can proceed to make his appointments right now."

I calculated the length of my halter-shank and the distance to Tip and saw that I could make it. So I leaped at him and struck him with my breast on the point of the shoulder and upset him as pretty as you please. That was an old trick Ern Givens had taught me, for use when we hazed broncs being ridden for the first time, although of course I never butted the broncs hard enough to throw them—merely to turn them and let them know who was boss. Also, in the cutting corral one has to bustle steers about a bit, too.

Tip picked himself up and backed away so I couldn't do it again.

"That's one I'll warrant you never had tried on you before, Tip," I informed him pleasantly.

"It is, rook, it is," Tip admitted, "and I don't want seconds on it either. Drat you, I'll be lame for a week."

He looked so surprised and pained and sheepish I thought the whole picket-line would give him the horse-laugh, but to my surprise nobody as much as snickered, so I decided Tip must have inspired them with fear

or respect. After all, Tip was an honest old warrior, as his latest remark had demonstrated, so out of respect for his years and service I declined to pick on him further and suggested that we let bygones be bygones.

"To err is mulish—to forgive is equine," Tip gasped, and stretched his mealy nose toward me. I rubbed mine against it and from that moment forward we were the best of friends.

However, as Tip inferred would be the case, he was quite lame the following morning and went on sick report. The veterinary came and looked him over and he and Rogan decided Tip had strained himself in draft. Tip wasn't at all sorry to be marked quarters, which is what they mark you in the army when you're too ill to do duty but not ill enough to go to hospital. He had half a notion to malinger and fake lameness after he was well, but on the fifth day following the injury he was so bored from merely standing on the picket-line that his soldierly instincts asserted themselves and, although his shoulder was still quite sore, he declined to favor it and was returned to duty.

I learned later that his duties were light. In the morning after stables he and Baguio, the other mule (termed Bags for short), hauled the manure out into a field. Twice a week they hauled forage from the quartermaster's depot, and occasionally they drew the colonel around in the depot-wagon. While the colonel had an automobile, he had been forty years in the army and, having gotten accustomed to mules and the depot-wagon, he preferred them. Many a time I've heard the colonel remark that two good mules would take him places no motorcar could go.

There was only one box stall in the stables and that was occupied by the captain's mount, a chestnut charger about half standard bred and half what have you. His name was Boodler. Why, I never knew. He was a stuck-up fellow by nature, and the special privileges accorded him as the skipper's mount had quite turned his head. I never thought much of him. He had too much knee action and too close action behind. He was too long in the body and too narrow in the barrel, and while he had a prodigious appetite he was hard to keep in condition. Also he had a ewe neck and a dirty habit, when the captain's striker entered the stall to groom him, of crowding the man over against the wall and leaning on him heavily. This would earn him a rap in the ribs with the curry-comb and give him an excuse to prance around and play smarty. When the captain mounted him he always tried to bolt; he fought the bit and pranced and shied at imaginary things. Stable Sergeant Rogan hated him.

"You ewe-necked, misshapen, addle-brained nuisance," I heard him say one day to Boodler, "you look more like a sheep than a horse. You shouldn't be ridden. You should have a collie dog to drive you."

It was the gossip of the picket-line that the only reason the captain maintained Boodler was because he couldn't afford a better horse. I gathered that Boodler had been a riding-academy horse, and the captain, lately a civilian, and knowing nothing of horses, had been swindled into buying him.

From Tip I gleaned all the news of the battery. That mule was one of the finest judges of men I have ever known—I mean men of military character and

masculine propensities. He never paid any attention to the privates, regarding them as a necessary evil, to be borne with patience and understanding until one of them showed up some morning with a corporal's rags tacked on his arm; whereupon Tip would have something pertinent to say about him.

From Tip I learned that the captain was a washout. He was a highly intelligent man, as indeed he had to be for his civilian job, which was cashier in a bank. He was a "ninety-day wonder"—that is, a graduate of the First Reserve Officers' Training Camp. Like his horse Boodler, however, he had (according to Tip) a wholly erroneous estimate of his own importance in the military machine.

Authority sat heavily upon him; he was much concerned with salutes and obeisance to his rank; he took the war very seriously and was strong on discipline without having the slightest idea of what discipline means. He saw too much and overlooked nothing; he gave harsh censure for work ordinarily well done and never a word of praise for work very well done. He never smiled; the men were afraid of him and, as I learned in time to come, when men are afraid of their captain they are liable to hate him, in which respect they are not so very different from horses, after all! When the captain spoke to a man he managed to make that man feel that he was less than the dust beneath the captain's feet; the captain (according to Tip) was always expecting the worst from his men, in consequence of which quite usually he got it.

"He's a military four-flusher," said Tip. "He realizes he doesn't know much more than the privates

about field artillery, so he tries to cover up his ignorance by being so gosh-darned military he gives me a pain. He's as cold as a Labrador frog. However, he's intelligent and earnest, and if he lasts long enough in campaign to get the meringue scraped off him he may make a red-leg yet. I've seen some awful excuses for men worked over in the military machine and turned out looking and acting half-way human. It doesn't do to make snap judgments in the service, Professor. Remember the old saying: 'A ragged colt may make a good horse.'

"My private opinion is that our present skipper doesn't belong with the line. He's an office man—a detail monger, and in the fulness of time he'll slip quite naturally into his place. I've been dragging this old colonel of ours around in the depot-wagon a matter of six years and I've kept my eyes and ears open so I get all the news first. Nobody can fool our Old Man very long. This regiment isn't a regiment to him. It's his family. He loves it. He knows every old non-commissioned officer in it by name; he hates fuss and feathers; his idea of soldiering is to get the job forward without friction and not take oneself too seriously.

"I'm telling you, Professor, we're due for a shift in skippers for only yesterday I heard the Old Man remark to the adjutant that Captain Carey was court-martialing too many of his men and busting and making non-commissioned officers entirely too often; that it had been his experience that in such cases the fault lay with the captain rather than with the men. The Old Man added, further, that Captain Carey did not have a

very good military figure and had a poor voice for command."

"Who is next in command in our battery?" I asked Tip.

"First Lieutenant Galwey. He's the executive officer. He's a washout, too, but it isn't quite his fault. The skipper nags him. Tells him what to do and then spoils everything by telling him how to do it, which robs Galwey of his initiative. The executive officer is another ninety-day wonder. He's a kind, decent young man, but far from firm enough. The men love him because he'll do anything for them and will cover up for them to the captain. They borrow money from him. He's naturally a compromiser, and I tell you an officer can't compromise on anything.

"Under the right captain Galwey would develop into a pretty fair officer. He doesn't know anything and needs leading and training. He doesn't care whether the men salute him or not, and that's all wrong. An officer should never permit enlisted men to forget that he is the President's representative. He may waive a lot of standing to attention if he cares to, but he must never waive the omission of offering to stand to attention and salute.

"Lieutenant Faraday is the third ranking officer. He's a first lieutenant. A society boy. Very polite, talks like an actor and dresses expensively. Absolutely not a democrat. Regards enlisted men as his social, mental and moral inferiors. He knows horses, though, and rides wonderfully. Keeps a string of polo ponies here. He plays good polo, so I've heard, but aside from that he doesn't appear to have any brains. He's

never worked a day in his life and doesn't know how. He makes everybody wait on him and has no hesitancy in asking a non-commissioned officer to perform menial services for him. He just doesn't know any better, that's all.

"I hear he's a dumb-bell too at field-artillery mathematics—whatever they are—but he speaks French. I heard the Top tell Rogan last night that he expects Faraday to be shifted to France and used as an interpreter. Rogan said he was glad to learn Faraday was good for something. He's wearing the stable sergeant out, you know. He thinks he knows more about horses and mules than Rogan and orders Rogan to do things Rogan knows from experience shouldn't be done."

"Does Rogan do them?" I asked.

"Say, what the devil kind of a soldier do you suppose Rogan is?" Tip demanded. "Of course he doesn't. Take Roamer, the off-wheeler on No. 2 gun, for instance. He's been lame lately. Faraday swore it was an incipient spavin and thought Roamer ought to be condemned. As a matter of fact it was thrush. The frog of Roamer's near hind hoof is rotten with it. The odor would knock you down, but Rogan will have Roamer cured in another month. Hurrah for Rogan. I love him like my own son."

"Mules never have sons, Tip," I couldn't help reminding him.

"I know," Tip replied sadly. "We're hybrids—without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity. But we're mighty dear to men that understand us and can appreciate good common sense and the non-quitting

spirit. Rogan is my friend. He swam ashore with me at Daiquiri when he was a mere boy. He packed me with ammunition to carry up to the infantry at San Juan Hill; he knew I had something on the ball and he made me the lead pack-mule, an honor which I appreciated and never betrayed. I was wounded at San Juan Hill, too—got a Mauser through the shoulder. Rogan attended me personally. After the Cuban campaign I was shipped to the Philippines and shot into a mountain-howitzer battery. And who should be in it when I joined but Rogan?

"He recognized me at once. 'Why, you scenery-loving old skunk,' he yelled and kissed me on the nose. Then he went to the captain and told him about my service and disposition, how I couldn't be stampeded and would never quit—and, by jings, once more I led the pack train! Pat Rogan and I have marched through mud up to my withers; we've swum every important river in Luzon, Samar, Leyte and Mindanao. We've been bitten and stung and starved; we've been shot at early and often.

"Once we had to get a gun into action on a point where a gun just couldn't be gotten. The other mules refused but Rogan led me up with the wheels and the trail. Then we made another trip down and came back with the tube and the trunnion, and while the gun crew put the gun together Rogan and I got the ammunition to them. Professor, that trail was so steep Rogan had to hang on to my neck to keep me from falling over backward, what with the weight of the pack. Ah me, those were the good old days!

"Then came the Boxer ruckus, and they stuck me

in a transport again and landed me at Taku, and we began the long drag overland to Peking. I saw L Troop of the Fourth Cavalry go through the corn field at Yang-Tsung with the pistol and come back through the Chinks again with the saber. Good work! I helped drag a three-point-two field-gun at Tientsin; we got a direct hit and my share was a chunk of hardware in my right rump. Luckily I was on the lead instead of the wheel; the wheelers never knew what struck them. But I never quit and Rogan never suggested it. I couldn't. We had to get the guns up, that's all, and the horses were dying or too weak to stand the gaff.

"I got two bullet wounds just after we'd gone into action before one of the gates of Peking and were galloping back with the limber. Rogan was hit, too. He was riding me that day. But we pulled through and finally went back to the Islands. There we had many years of war and peace until the Mexican situation called for troops on the border; and as we had a lot of excess animals in Manila and an empty horse transport going home, they repatriated two hundred and fifty of us. I tell you it was hard to part with Rogan. Imagine my joy therefore when I was assigned to the ——th and found old Pat there on the job. I was in E Battery first, but one day I saw Rogan and raised such a riot on the picket-line I made him notice me.

"Now I have nine battle scars on my old hide, and Rogan was with me when I got them all. So he checked up on the scars and identified me, and five minutes later I was traded for another mule, and dear old Pat Rogan and I were back together again. I

was a little run down at the time so Rogan bought carrots for me at his own expense. My teeth had been neglected and I had lampers. Rogan filed my teeth and cured me. Cripes, what a sore mouth I had! He gave me bran mashes and hand-picked my hay; he turned me loose to prowl around as I pleased, knowing I wouldn't betray his confidence and go where I shouldn't, and he saw to it that I didn't do a lick of work until I was as fat and slick and shiny as I was the day I left the farm. Dear old Rogan! All I ask is that I get sent to France with him. We've seen a lot of service together, Rogan and I, and it just isn't in the cards, I suppose, that we'll come back from this war. All I hope is that when we go we'll go together and set an old-army example to these new troops."

I interrupted Tip's eulogy to ask him about the second lieutenants.

"Briggs is an old enlisted man—ten years in a light battery, a graduate of the non-commissioned officers' school at Fort McKinley, Luzon," he informed me. "An old top sergeant and a good one. Knows men and how to get the best out of them without friction. But the poor devil is completely bewildered in this outfit; he just doesn't recognize the service any more. This regiment used to be the first battalion of the ——th, you know, but they split the ——th three ways and used each battalion as the nucleus for a new regiment.

"We haven't very many old soldiers with us, but what we have are good, and they'll stick with the outfit because they know they aren't officers and gentlemen and if commissioned they'd feel out of place. I heard

Briggs say, quite bitterly, the other day, that if it wasn't for his wife, who induced him to accept a commission, he'd rather be wearing a red hat-cord and riding with the limbers. The top sergeant rides with the limbers, you know. The Old Man appreciates Briggs, however. I heard him tell the adjutant so. Briggs'll have a battery of his own one of these days."

"How about my new master, Lieutenant Burwell?" I asked Tip, for of course I knew less than nothing about the man.

"Why, don't you know your own master?" Tip brayed, surprised.

Feeling that I could trust Tip to the limit with any confidence, I told him all about myself and that I was, in reality, owned by Ern Givens. Tip was profoundly interested and declared that, while it was never his habit to pay any particular attention to privates until they had been in the service at least a year, he would give Ern the double O the next time he came to groom me, and see how the boy shaped up.

"Burwell," said Tip, adverting to my query, "is the flower of the flock. To begin, he is and always was a gentleman. His father owns a big cattle ranch in California, and they also breed race horses. It doesn't matter much whether the ranch pays or not because the Burwells are rich. Young Burwell secured an appointment to West Point, but got thrown out in his third year—not for any particular offense, so I've heard, but because in that year he exceeded the number of demerits a man may have and still remain in the academy. I imagine he was just taking life too easily —and when he lost out at West Point he was jarred

into a realization that this life of ours is what we—and not our parents—make it. Burwell's father felt disgraced—so young Burwell didn't come home. He proved he had the right stuff in him by enlisting in the field artillery. They made him a corporal at once; in three months he was a sergeant; when he had served two years he went up for a commission from the ranks and won it."

Old Tip paused to nose a fly off my neck. He chuckled deep down in his throat. "And the joke of it is," he continued, "the boy was commissioned in May of 1916 and is absolutely senior to every member of his old class at West Point, who weren't commissioned until July. I heard him telling Rogan one day (he and Rogan were enlisted men together) that after being commissioned he got a thirty-day leave and went home in his uniform to call on his father and mother; and when he'd explained the situation the old man was proud as Lucifer and swore his boy was fully equipped with the Burwell brand of guts.

" 'Samuel,' he declared, 'I'm going to give you fifty thousand dollars and two of the finest and best-schooled thoroughbreds on the ranch, as a reward of merit. An army officer ought to have independent means. He can't live like a gentleman on his salary—that is, a shave-tail can't.'

" 'Well, this shave-tail can and will,' says our Sam Burwell. 'I'll save enough out of my pay to buy myself a horse, and as for the fifty thousand, you keep it. I haven't learned how to spend money and I don't intend to put on a lot of dog with my less fortunate brother officers.'

"So he came to the old regiment that this one was partly made from and rode a battery mount—not a half decent one at that. And now he has you—free gratis! Of course there's nothing unusual about your Ern Givens liking him well enough, on sight, to loan you to him. Everybody likes our Sammy. He's always referred to, in private, as Sammy, and when men speak of an officer that familiarly it's a sign they like him. Same way when they give one a nickname. My last battery commander was known as the Little Feller. He's a colonel now—a war colonel, of course, and the day he got his eagles and came down to say good-by to Sergeant Rogan he wept. He said he didn't enjoy the promotion at all, because it meant that never, never again would he command a battery.

"Of course, Professor, you must know that there are only three jobs in the army worth having. One is top sergeant, the other is company commander, and the third is colonel. While one is a major or lieutenant-colonel he's on his dignity; has all to do with officers and scarcely anything with enlisted men. But once he becomes a colonel he's the daddy of the regiment and he thinks less about his officers and watches over the enlisted men like they were children. He's got to be close to them if he expects them to be good boys and reflect credit on his office in the day of stress."

"Who and what is our first sergeant, Tip?" I asked.

"Now you're asking something, Professor. The top soldier of this outfit is Dink Munro. He's five feet five, with a breast on him as broad as an ambulance and covered with campaign ribbons. He's been a top sergeant fifteen years. Rogan says Dink Munro has

pipe-clay and saddle-soap in his bones instead of marrow; he's all that holds this outfit together, and in spite of the captain, Dink is making a battery out of it. When he speaks, the men jump. He's terrible but just; he doesn't know anything except field artillery, but by the Great Gun of Athlone, as Rogan says, he knows that!

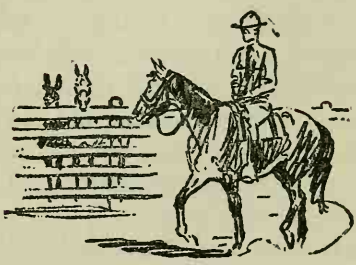
"Dink Munro will not be with us long, however. He's too good. He has steadily declined a commission, but they'll force it on him yet. The Old Man is going to drop in at Dink's orderly tent some bright day and talk to him about his duty in this emergency and the first thing Dink will know he'll be wearing two bars and skippering a battery.

"Our duty sergeants do not amount to very much at present," Tip went on, "but nobody expects anything from them. The captain has picked them because they're college men and they think their chevrons are the insignia of superior breeding. I tell you, Prof, the best non-com is a rough-neck. We have a stevedore boss, a barkeeper from a tough saloon, a section boss, a cowboy, two policemen and an old sour-dough who was shift boss in a mine; and any one of them would be worth two of these inexperienced and untried boys just out of college.

"They know men and how to handle them, and they would order a thing done and not ask their men to do it. Unfortunately they eat mashed potatoes with their knives (so Rogan says), so they're still privates. Well, their chance will come. Sammy Burwell will have this battery before he's six months older. I know he will. I heard the Old Man tell the

lieutenant-colonel he would. And when Burwell gets us there'll be chevrons flying around like leaves in an autumn gale. Burwell has the jump on all of the junior officers. He has had two years in West Point, so he knows the gentleman end of the game, and he put in two years in the ranks and knows soldiers from soul to guts."

I didn't say anything about it to Tip at the time, but I thought: "Well, somebody had better keep an eye on my master Ern Givens, for if that old riding boss doesn't know men and how to handle them, then I'm distantly related to a donkey."



CHAPTER IX

YES, I had the greatest faith in Ern Givens getting somewhere in the army. And I didn't have long to wait for Ern to bring himself to the attention of his superiors. About a week after we'd joined up we were out on the terrain with the battery, getting practice in selecting a position and going into it. Lieutenant Burwell wasn't with us that day. The battery clerk was down with measles and the lieutenant was helping Dink Munro get out the payroll, so at Burwell's request Ern was riding me that day to give me exercise.

Ern had been assigned to the battery commander's detail, which rides far ahead of the firing battery to select the position, mark the route for the battery coming up, establish a battery commander's position (known as the observation post), string the telephone wires from the O. P. to the guns and figure the firing data.

Well, the B. C. detail rode off half an hour before the executive officer moved out with the battery, and the captain had a blue-print map of the terrain and decided to study it. Being new to the mounted service (or any other kind of service for that matter), he did the one thing the provisional drill and service regulations specifically warn one against doing—and that is to open a map while sitting on a horse.

Nobody ever opened a map on me, so I don't know whether it would affect me or not; but I do know that the crackling of the stiff paper and the vague outlines of something unusual in back of them frighten horses to death, and they just naturally go crazy. Some horses will try to bolt, but nine out of ten—even the most docile of horses—will immediately start pitching like the craziest outlaw you ever saw at a *rodeo*.

Well, the captain's horse did that—and at the first pitch the blue-print map floated out of the captain's hands and over that fool horse's head, which terrified him even more. At the second pitch the captain shot out on his horse's neck and slid off—almost but not quite, for his boot got caught in the stirrup.

My friends, I give you my word he was about to be dragged to his death and, as a matter of fact, he was dragged about fifty feet, kicked twice and trampled on once. The men stood frozen with terror—all except my beloved master. I felt Ern's legs tighten on me and I leaped from a standstill into a gallop, the way a well-trained cow-horse can.

I'm fast still, for all my years, but when I was five years old I was just a honey-colored streak once I got down to business. Ern drove me straight at that mad horse. Bang! With the point of my shoulder I took him, full force, on the muscular cushion of his—and knocked him sprawling. Even as he went down Ern shot out of the saddle head first, the way he used to do when we bulldogged a steer; and lit, sprawling his hundred and eighty pounds on that horse's head.

Of course, as you probably know, O'Malley, when you're down flat and a man sits on your head, you

can't get up. You'll scrape wildly with all fours trying to, but you realize almost instantly how helpless you are, so you lie still and pant and wonder what's going to happen next. And it was that way with Boodler. The fall had knocked the wind out of him, and he lay still.

"Climb down off your dead tails, some of you men," Ern yelled, "and cut the captain loose."

The instrument sergeant dismounted on the run, got out his knife as he came, slashed the stirrup-strap and dragged the captain away from Boodler, his foot still caught in the stirrup. The skipper was unconscious and bloody, but Ern did not wait to paw him over.

"Lay him out flat," he ordered the instrument sergeant. "One of you privates come here and stand to this horse's head when I let him up. I'm going back to camp for a doctor and an ambulance."

The instant Boodler got up (he was wringing wet with sweat by that time—all from terror and excitement) Ern forked me and we headed back for Doniphan. I didn't run. I flew. I cleared a ten-foot arroyo and topped a six-foot gate; we passed a general officer in a staff car, and he yelled furiously to Ern to stop—wanted to know what the hell he meant by running a horse to death. And when Ern wouldn't stop, that general officer had his chauffeur turn the car around and pursue us, seeing which Ern pulled me up and rode back to meet him.

"Private, you're in arrest," yelled the general officer as we met. "How dare you run a government horse like that?"

"He's my horse, mister," said Ern, "and I'll run

him to death if I like. I'm on my way for a doctor and an ambulance. My captain's been dragged by his horse. Don't stand there gawking at me, man. Turn that car around and follow me." And without waiting to see that the general to whom he had given such furious orders was following us, Ern and I headed back to the battery.

The general followed, but he was after Ern, not the captain! They lifted our poor skipper into the tonneau and beat it for the base hospital, though not until that confounded general had made Ern Givens furnish him with his name, battery and regiment. Even then he suspected Ern of lying to him, for he made Ern show his dog tag and took down his number.

"I'll attend to you, my man," he promised. "What you need is about six months in the mill to teach you respect for your superior officer."

I regret to state that Ern Givens forgot a number of things right then. The dear chap hadn't been in the army long enough to know much about it, you understand; and the service hadn't become what you might call a habit with him. About all Ern knew was man to man stuff—and just now he wasn't a soldier, but a wild, free, fearless riding boss fresh from the range.

"To hell with you, old man," he answered. "Don't stand there argying with me. Get into that car and hustle back with my captain to the hospital."

The general got red in the face. He seemed to swell like a defunct steer. "Sergeant," said he, turning to the instrument sergeant, "take this impudent private to your regimental guard-house, and tell the officer of

the day that he is to be confined by the order of the division commander, who will prefer charges against him within twenty-four hours."

"Yes, sir," says the instrument sergeant (he was a nice little college boy who'd been studying engineering). He was all a-tremble.

When the general had departed the instrument sergeant turned to Ern Givens. "I hope you'll come peaceably, Private Givens," he pleaded.

"Bah!" said my beloved master. "No child like you can hustle me to the mill. I'll ride back and put up this horse and report myself to the sheriff or marshal or whatever he's called in the army."

So he forked me and rode quietly back to camp, where he cooled me out, wiped me off, gave me a drink and told his troubles to Rogan, whose black Irish eyes snapped with pride and mirth.

"I'm sorry for you, my son," he said, and shook Ern Givens's hand. "Run along now and report yourself to the officer of the day. Tell him ye're confined be ordher of the commandhin' gineral for impudence to your superior officer an' conduct prejudicial to good ordher and military discipline. And may the divil fly away wit' that commandhin' gineral if he only flew a mile a day."

CHAPTER X

THERE was considerable excitement in the battery when the news of Ern Givens's trouble got bruited about. The men on stable fatigue talked of nothing else. Ern hadn't been long enough in the battery to get acquainted, so he didn't even have a buddy to mourn his passing, and I was horrified to discover that many of the men rather enjoyed his predicament.

In the somewhat simple and secluded world in which I had been raised men always felt sorry when a good man got into trouble, but I was to learn in the wider arena to which I had now been called that the majority of men have a disposition to rejoice at the other fellow's misfortune and seldom take the trouble to understand it. It was the consensus of opinion that Ern had spoken out of his turn, that he should have known better. Ern was a grave and somewhat silent man until he knew you well; consequently some of the men considered him stuck-up and declared that sixty days in the mill would constitute a wholesome lesson to him. One man—a know-it-all of thirty days' service—gave it as his opinion that Ern would probably be blooeyed to an infantry casualty replacement draft immediately.

"You talk too much and too loose, son," Stable Sergeant Rogan informed this wind-bag (his name was Pert Havers). "When you have learned enough to

keep the nose of ye clane, 'twill be in ordher for ye to make military prophecies. Just for that there's two more horses for ye to groom."

A silence promptly descended upon the stable police. But Pert Havers's prophecy caused me a vast deal of uneasiness, nevertheless, and as Tip was the only old soldier on the picket-line and the only one I could confide in, I told him in detail the story of Ern's adventure with the commanding general, and begged him for some encouragement.

Really, I thought Tip would die laughing. He threw back his head and brayed like a fool, but it was no laughing matter to me, and as Tip's hilarity appeared unwarranted, I was instantly irritated. I pinned back my ears and Tip, observing this scowl, promptly piped down to a chuckle.

"By the corn of Missouri," he declared, "it's lucky I wasn't in draft when you told me that one. I'd have busted a hame-strap trying to pull and hold in my laughter at the same time. I'd have been willing to live on musty hay for a week just for the delight of seeing the Old Man's face when Ern Givens sounded off. But don't worry, Professor. When Ern goes up before the summary court officer Sammy Burwell will be on hand to defend him. Sam's the battery morale officer and always defends the men at a court martial, unless the victim happens to be a bad one or a man Sam has preferred charges against himself, in which cases Sam becomes the prosecuting attorney! He'll have Ern returned to duty in forty-eight hours, so buck up, old kid, and don't look so mournful."

"Are you certain, Tip?" I pleaded.

"I am, Professor."

"How will Burwell do it?"

"I don't know, but I have half a notion he'll tell Ern Givens to inform the summary court officer he didn't know he was doing wrong. Then the summary court officer will ask Ern if the articles of war have ever been read to him, and Ern will answer truthfully and state that they have not; whereupon Captain Carey will be called in to make Ern out a liar. But Carey will not lie, even to save his own skin, and I'm almost certain Ern has never had the articles of war read to him, because only this morning I heard Burwell tell your master to report to the first sergeant's tent after recall from drill today to have the articles read to him.

"In civil life ignorance of the law excuses nobody, but in the army it's a mighty good excuse for conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline, which is the charge that covers impudence, back talk and open and silent insubordination. Ern will end up by having the laugh on the commanding general, but believe you me, Prof, it will be his first and last laugh. Let him try any more funny business after the articles of war have been read to him and the commanding general will make Ern a special order of business. Yes, sir, the old wolf certainly will make hell look like a summer holiday to that gay young buckaroo."

"Tip," I declared, "you're certainly a great comfort to me. I had begun to think the army a terrible place."

"Hell's bells, no!" Tip replied. "Of course a soldier has no rights to speak of; about all he has are a few privileges and they can be taken away from him. But

by and large a fellow can go through enlistment after enlistment and be happy as a dickey bird, provided he's respectful and self-respecting and obeys a few simple rules cheerfully. He'll always get a square deal if he deserves it, and even when he doesn't he'll get more genuine support in the army than out of it. Army life! Boy, it's the life of Riley!"

After retreat that evening Lieutenant Burwell came down to the picket-line to see how I was making it. He'd stopped in at the kitchen and grafted half a dozen carrots off the mess sergeant, and the first one he gave me I took neatly by the end, tossed my head and flipped it over the picket-line to Tip. My new master tried to recover it for me, but wise old Tip put his left front foot over it and refused to be budged, and while Sam was trying to shoulder him off it the wily old wretch nipped another carrot out of Sam's blouse pocket. He gulped it down quickly and pinched another, but this time he got caught at it.

"Well, Tip, you are an old soldier," Sam Burwell declared admiringly. "O. K., you fox! We'll split them fifty-fifty," and he fed me the other three. Tip eyed me sideways to see if I had taken umbrage at his rascality, but I snickered softly and told him it was all right, in view of the fact that he and I were buddies.

"Well," Tip declared, "it's comforting to find a newcomer showing so much respect for age and long service. I must say it hasn't taken you long to realize that rank has its privileges. The first time Rogan gives me an apple I'll divvy with you."

True to Tip's prediction, Ern reported for duty the following afternoon. It seems it's against regulations

to keep a man in the guard-house more than forty-eight hours without preferring charges against him, and the commanding general didn't waste five minutes before ordering his adjutant to prefer charges against Ern. From the gossip on the picket-line I learned that the orders were in our regimental office that same day and after luncheon Ern was tried.

Sure enough, Sam Burwell appeared for him and claimed and proved Ern had never had the articles of war read to him. However, the summary court officer didn't figure on getting into a jam with the commanding general, so he sentenced Ern to three months in the divisional stockade and forfeiture of two-thirds of three months' pay. Then he wrote a letter to the commanding officer informing him what he had done, and that satisfied the commanding officer, who dismissed Ern from his mind then and there.

Unfortunately he didn't figure on our colonel. It seems the colonel has to review the findings of all summary courts, so he reviewed the findings in Ern's case, declared the sentence excessive, reduced it to an official reprimand and returned Ern to duty. I heard Ern tell Rogan, however, that the reprimand the Old Man administered was a perfectly manufactured article.

"I never before realized," said Ern, "just how a calf feels after he's been roped, thrown, dragged to the fire, earmarked, dehorned, branded and inoculated. I certainly don't crave to meet that colonel again."

"Well, he'll remember ye and call ye by name every time he meets ye, hereafter," Rogan advised. "Don't be down in the mouth, lad. The Ould Man's bark is worse nor his bite, although whin he do bite 'tis blood he's afther."

"He read the articles of war to me himself, Sergeant."

"He would. 'Twas part of his plan to impress upon ye the horrible pit from which he was kind enough to rescue ye. Do ye, like the good man, be grateful to him. He's no trimmer, but the summary court officer is, and I'll bet ye two to one that what the Ould Man said to you was a holy benediction compared wit' what he said to his summary court officer. Ohone! If it hadn't been for this blasted big war comin' up I'd be a civilian now, wit' a little farm o' land an' me chickens an' pigs and vegetables about me. 'Tis a terrible life we lead, so it is."

Tip flashed me a wink. "Rogan's been talking about that little farm and the chickens and pigs and vegetables for twenty years to my certain knowledge," he whispered. "That man in civil life? He'd perish of loneliness. All I hope is that I'm not present the day Rogan is retired. He'll weep."

CHAPTER XI

THE following day was Saturday and all training activities ceased at twelve o'clock, not to be resumed until Monday morning. The soldiers scattered into adjacent towns, with the exception of those on guard and on K. P. and stable police. About two o'clock the top sergeant and half a dozen men came down to the stables.

"Hurrah!" brayed Tip. "There's going to be a fight."

Under instructions from the top, Rogan had a couple of stable police open up two bales of straw and spread it on the ground. Then two buckets of water and two harness sponges were brought and placed on the opposite side of this straw-covered area.

"You'll be the referee, Rogan," the top announced. "Corporal Downey, you will be the timekeeper and rap on Rogan's anvil with a hammer when time is called." (The forge and anvil where the animals were shod was close by.) "One of you lads give me a hand with these gloves. Two others help Havers."

"By the corn of Missouri," Tip murmured, "this is going to be a rich dish. That windy Pert Havers has said something personal to the top—probably a deadly insult—so the top's waiving his rank to give Pert Havers the satisfaction Pert craves. Pert's bigger than a skinned horse and Dink's so short he'll have

to leap off the ground to punch Pert's nose. But watch him do it."

I watched with a great deal of interest. The fight went six three-minute rounds, and Rogan saw to it that the battle was conducted with equal fairness to both men. They fought on the layer of straw, owing to the ground being too hard to risk having a man, knocked out, strike his head against it. Havers gave the top an awful thrashing, but he just couldn't upset him and he couldn't make Dink quit.

When the fourth round closed, Dink's face looked like a ripe tomato, but Pert Havers was very tired. In the fifth Dink continued to carry the fight to Pert, and just as Corporal Downey rapped the anvil Dink leaped and got both hands home on Pert's chin. Pert went down, but the gong saved him and he was dragged to his corner. When he came up for the sixth he was helpless, so Dink chopped *him* to pieces and finally knocked him out—cold.

"Now, then, Windy," said Dink, when Pert came to, "who's a tyrannical, contemptible squirt?"

"I am," said Pert Havers.

Dink shook his head like a little bantam rooster and rolled away on his short legs to the medical detachment office to make repairs.

"Thus endeth the first lesson," said Tip comically. "Whenever they ask old Dink for it he obliges them. I saw signs of this Pert Havers developing into the battery bully, and I guess Dink did, too. He knew he'd have to put Pert in his place sooner or later. Well, that sight will sustain me while Bags and I drag the Old Man down to Fort Sill in the station-wagon.

I wouldn't be surprised if I come back with a mouthful of news."

Shortly after Tip and Bags were harnessed and driven away, Sam Burwell came along and Rogan told him about the fight.

"There are various ways of maintaining discipline and inculcating respect," Sam declared, "and in certain cases I dare say the top's recipe is the only one that will work. I fear the captain will not like it, however. He believes a gentleman should never fight a mucker."

"Dink's no gentleman," Rogan declared. "He's a top sergeant."

"Well, he ranks Havers, and the captain will think he was undignified. He's liable to bust Dink for that."

"Thrue for ye, sir," Rogan observed with the license of an old soldier and former bunkie. "He's been schamin' to get rid of Dink for a month, so he can tack the diamond on one of his young college gintlemin—bad cess to him! Well, let him! Whin he busts Dink he'll bust his right arm, an' divil a wurrd o' lie in that, sir. Will the lootinant be afther takin' a young leddy for a ride this afthernoon?"

They looked at each other, and Sam Burwell smiled. "You're out of place in stables, Rogan," he declared. "You should be in Intelligence. The young lady will ride the Professor. Now, what have you got for me?"

Dear old Rogan! He always had something good tucked away for his favorites. He went away down to the end of the picket-line now and returned leading a bay gelding with more than a dash of hot blood in him.

"This is Dandy, sir," he said. "He was a mis-

undhershtood horse in E Battery. They thought he was dangerous, so they did, so I traded them a bag o' bones I had here that the divil himself couldn't put an ounce of flesh on. I had his confidence for two weeks before I put that new man Givens on him. He gave Givens a ride, to be sure, but the lad shtuck, and afther Dandy had dramatized himself Givens talked to him. He's been wurrkin' on Dandy ever since, and ye have me worrd for it Dandy is safe for the young leddy to ride now."

"He's a grand horse," said Sam Burwell. "Rogan, you're the shadow of a rock in a weary land. Saddle him and I'll give him a try-out."

So Burwell mounted Dandy, who behaved like a gentleman. Then Rogan put the English saddle on me, and Dandy and Burwell and I went over to the hospital at Fort Sill where Miss Mary Vardon was waiting for us. She had a riding-habit on and looked sweet enough to kiss. So I kissed her.

"You darling!" she said, and mounted me, but not until I had surprised her by getting down on my knees to make it easy for her to put her little foot in the stirrup.

"If I were a battery commander and that horse was a recruit I'd make him a corporal," Burwell declared.

Well, we went out into the country and found a nice dirt road lined with trees. Dandy was a very reserved horse, but he entered into the spirit of the game when Miss Vardon and Burwell decided on a half-mile dash. I had to stretch myself to beat him, but was careful not to beat him too far, for I have discovered that some horses, like some men, cannot lose gracefully.

My master was calling the girl Miss Vardon when

they started out and she was calling him Mr. Burwell. I didn't pay much attention to their chatter, however, until I heard him call her Mary. She called him Sam presently, and the next thing I knew they were riding boot to boot, and Dandy nickered that he thought they were holding hands.

"There's something doing here, Dandy," I remarked.

"You know it, kid," said Dandy. "Hey! He's leaning out of the saddle."

"He won't have to lean out so far he'll fall, Dandy. She's leaning too."

Then we heard a little smack and my master said, "Mary, I love you."

"Am I the first girl you ever loved, Sam, dear?" says Mary.

"No, you're not," he replied. "I wouldn't fool you, Mary. I've been in love a number of times—or thought I was, but this is the first time it's ever given my heart such a sudden crazy twist."

"Well, I like competition," Mary assured him. "And I like the truth. Sam, you're a darling, and I've loved you since that day at the railroad station in Northern California, when you met the Professor and Givens."

"And you bowled me over that day by offering to cash my check. I had to take a good look at you then, Mary, because dead game sports among your sex aren't as plentiful as we men could wish. And of course after that look I was sunk without a trace."

"I'm still willing to take a chance on you, Sam."

"Please God you'll not regret it when you do. Will you marry me, Mary?"

"Must I tell you in words of one syllable? Of

"I didn't pay much attention to their chatter until I heard him call her Mary."

course I will, but not until the war is over. We each have our work to do until we can surrender our tasks to somebody else. You're just a war-time soldier, aren't you, Sam?"

"No, I belong to the honorable profession of arms, Mary. However, I'll probably be a permanent captain when the war is over—perhaps a major. We'll have light, heat and quarters and at the worst two hundred dollars a month to start with."

"Why do you feel it necessary to give me warning, Sam?" Mary asked very softly.

"Because I want you to know that as an army officer's wife you will have to learn to count the pennies. Unless a man has independent means married life in the junior grades is one long grind of sacrifice and thrift. Even in the senior grades we have no money to throw at the birds."

"Well, I have, Sam. I can throw a thousand dollars a month at the birds if I feel like it. I learned nursing just because I think all women should know how to do something constructive, in case they should be thrown on their own resources, but I can dwell in idleness if I wish to."

"People will say I married you for your money," Sam Burwell protested.

Mary laughed. I liked to hear her laugh. She had a contralto voice and her little throaty chuckle was very pleasant music, indeed. "Are you going to jilt me just because people will say that, Sam?"

"Let's ride into that little grove of willows," he suggested. "I can't very well answer that question out here on the road."

So we trotted over to the grove, and Sam dismounted and put his arms around Mary and drew her head down on his shoulder and told her to cease propounding dumb-bell questions to him. "Will you put your thousand a month into the pot with my two hundred and split the swag fifty-fifty, Mary?" he asked her.

"Don't propound dumb-bell questions," she retorted. "Why do you ask?"

"Oh, well, I wanted to be quite certain I wouldn't be making any mistake when the preacher mutters over us," he laughed, and I knew what he was laughing at. I remembered that Tip had told me Sam's father owned a huge cattle ranch and was very rich and would gladly have given Sam fifty thousand dollars when he won his commission if Sam had been weak enough to take it. I realized that Sam was going to keep his own prosperous state a secret to surprise Mary with on their wedding day.

We didn't get back to camp until just before retreat. Sam and Mary had found a grassy bank under a tree alongside the road, and dismounted to sit there and make plans. There was a fine patch of green grass there and suddenly Mary said:

"It's a long time since the Professor has had an opportunity to do any grazing. He must be weary of dry feed." And thereupon she slipped my bridle off and turned me loose. So Sam decided to take a chance on Dandy and turned him loose, too. We had a gorgeous picnic. One misses succulent feed in his diet.

To my very great surprise I was led, upon my return, into the box stall heretofore occupied by Captain

Carey's horse, Boodler, and Boodler was on the picket-line.

"Rank has its privileges," Tip called to me from his place far down toward the end of the stable. "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord, as the chaplain says. 'He hath taken down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted them of low degree.' "

"What do you mean, Tip?"

"I told you I'd have an earful of news when I got back," he answered. "Sam Burwell's been made a captain, and Carey's been relieved of command of the company and blooeyed to Finance in the quartermaster's department. The Old Man remembered Carey used to be a banker. Sam Burwell is now a senior battery officer. He was commissioned a second lieutenant months before the firsts got theirs, so the Old Man jumped him over Lieutenant Galwey. I don't think Burwell is really a captain as yet, but we had the vacancy, the colonel recommended Burwell for it, and I suppose division headquarters wired the War Department asking for immediate confirmation of the promotion. The formal order will be out later. So, naturally, you outrank Boodler. He goes out and you come in. I congratulate you, buddy. You're the top horse of this outfit."

I was too surprised to say a word, and while I was thinking how nice everything was turning out for Sam Burwell and me, Tip sounded off with some more news.

"Captain Carey busted the top to private last night and put in a Johnny-come-lately. This morning the Old Man met Dink without his chevrons and his face

all upside down. Trust our colonel to mark the sparrow's fall. 'How come, Sergeant?' he says to Dink.

" 'Begging the colonel's pardon, I'm a private, sir,' says Dink. 'A big wind-bag in my battery called me a tyrannical, contemptible little squirt and said if it wasn't for my size and my chevrons he'd take me apart to see what made my wheels go round. So I took him apart instead—not such an easy job, either—and because I lowered my first sergeant's dignity to engage in a brawl with a private I'm on K. P. today.'

" 'Dog-gone it,' says the Old Man. 'I must see to it that my adjutant consults me once in a while before signing my name to regimental orders demoting non-commissioned officers.'

"Then he laughed and walked away, but the first place Bags and I had to haul him was up to division headquarters. He went in to see the commanding general and when he came out he was smiling like a fox sucking eggs. The rest is history. Sam Burwell will take over the battery at retreat, bust the new top and put the diamond back on little Dink, who hasn't even lost a day's pay—busted and made again the same day. By the corn of Missouri, this battery's going to be an *outfit* from now on. What news have you picked up in your travels?"

I told Tip about the battery commander's engagement to the trained nurse at the Fort Sill hospital and mentioned, incidentally, that she suited me, since even in the excitement of becoming engaged to Sam Burwell she had remembered to turn me loose to graze.

Tip smacked his old lips. "Holy Moses," he declared, "how I wish somebody would turn me loose in

about six inches of alfalfa or blue grass! Half-grown corn would be better. It's been years since I've had my nose in a tuft of real greenery."

CHAPTER XII

TIP'S news was accurate. The next morning when we harnessed and hitched to the guns and caissons, Sam Burwell was wearing two silver bars and giving all the orders. We had two first lieutenants now and one second, and the two firsts were unhappy to think that Sam had jumped them. The executive officer was particularly depressed and very sulky and inclined to what Tip called "silent insubordination." So Sam called him over and told him, in a low voice so nobody else could hear him, to button up his lower lip, be a sport and play the game; that the war was young yet, with opportunities for promotion practically unlimited—for the efficient. "And you're not efficient," he added. "Not that I blame you for that, because nobody has insisted on it. From today on, however, I'll insist on it, and don't you forget it, Mr. Galwey."

Some men are born to command, some achieve it and some have it thrust upon them. But when you meet one of the breed that's been born to command you're never in doubt about *him*. The executive officer said he was sorry he'd exposed his sense of disappointment and would play the game hereafter.

"I know you will," said Sam. "Take a leaf out of my book and when you see one of your inferiors getting slack or inefficient crack him hard at once. The

chances are you'll not have to do it again." Then he laughed and hit the executive a friendly little slap on the shoulder, which made the latter grin a little sheepishly. "There, old man," said Sam, "your lower lip is all buttoned up nicely now. Get back on the job."

The executive gave Sam the Big Figure Four. I mean he saluted him. "The battery is ready to move out, sir."

Now, if you get a good husky intelligent recruit you can make a pretty fair infantryman out of him in three months of intensive training—that is, if you don't waste too much time on military etiquette, perfect drill and sanitation, and confine yourself to the basic essentials. But it takes longer to turn out a red-leg, as they used to call the artillerymen in the days when the army wore the blues, and the red stripe down the trousers leg was worn by officers and non-coms.

Captain Carey hadn't had time to learn his job—and he had had command thrust upon him. On the other hand Sam Burwell had had two years at West Point, two years as an enlisted man and about six months as an officer in a battery, so he knew his business fairly well. At any rate command came to him as readily as one slips on an old boot.

Now, before a battery is ready to march, each gun and caisson corporal is supposed to assure himself that his section is ready to the last detail, and when it is he so reports to his section chief, who is a sergeant. The section chief is supposed to be sure the corporals are right before he reports to the top sergeant. Meanwhile the top has been prowling around the outfit, making sure the section chiefs are going to report some-

thing that is so; hence, when the top reports to the platoon commanders, and they in turn report to the executive officer, who reports to the battery commander that the battery is ready to move out, the battery commander is pretty well assured that it is.

Well, this morning, Sam Burwell wasn't sure. In fact, he knew there were a lot of things wrong with the battery, so he dismounted and inspected it and wrote in a little book everything he found wrong. Then he sent each corporal to make an inspection to see if he could discover what was wrong, and when the corporals were finished he sent the chiefs of section to check on the corporals. Next he sent the top to check the chiefs of section, the platoon commanders to check the top and the executive officer to check the platoon commanders.

Then he inspected the outfit again, checked off what had been corrected and called attention, not only to the corrections, but to the items they hadn't corrected. There were collars that didn't fit, ends of straps not tucked into the keepers, straps twisted, snaps about-faced, bridles too loose or too tight; saddle-blankets not folded properly, saddles too high on the withers or too low, cinched too loosely or too tight; brakes not set, shields not locked, trail-spikes not properly clamped; men not shaved or otherwise untidy; one loose shoe on a caisson wheeler, one shoe missing on a gun leader; men not standing to horse, or if standing, without their hands on the reins.

This last is important to prevent runaways, because if there's anything worse than a runaway battery of field artillery it's a runaway train. A saddle too loosely cinched galls a horse's withers; if too tightly

cinched it scalds his belly and distresses him so he cannot do his job. A horse with a loose shoe or minus a shoe is a led horse before the day's march is ended; a horse with an ill-fitting zinc collar is a horse on sick report for a month with a fistula on his shoulder; a bridle too loose may drop off; a bridle too tight will chafe a horse's mouth and drive him crazy; saddle-blankets not properly folded will produce a sore back; carriages without the brakes set may run up on the wheelers, frighten them and start a runaway. There's a reason for doing everything right, and Sam Burwell explained it to the battery.

"The trouble with this outfit," he added, "is that the corporals really make the inspection—or, rather, half make it—and all the higher-ups take their word for it. I'll not bust the corporals because they're the only non-coms who have done anything constructive, but I am going to bust some sergeants for neglect and inefficiency, and I am desolated because I have no power to do things to the platoon commanders. Now then, you platoon commanders and section chiefs, what teams on each gun and caisson are in the poorest flesh?"

The wheelers on three guns and three caissons were adjudged poorest in flesh. No. 3 gun and No. 3 caisson wheelers appeared to be in as good condition as the swing teams and the leaders.

"Can anybody tell me why the wheelers should be in poorer flesh than the other teams?" the battery commander demanded.

Nobody seemed to be able to tell him, so he turned to the section chief on No. 3 section, in which section, by the way, everything had checked up rather well.

"You tell them, Sergeant," he commanded.

"I'm a corporal, sir. I'm only acting section chief. My section chief is on sick report, sir. Been in hospital a month, sir. However, I reckon my wheelers are in good flesh because I keep hammering at the swing and lead drivers to keep their teams in draft and not let the wheelers do all the work. Hard work will pull a horse down in flesh."

"How long have you been in the service, Corporal?"

"Three months, sir."

"What were you in civil life?"

"A farmer, sir."

"I knew it. You understand horses and draft. You've been accustomed to hard work and taking care of your farm equipment, so you're not afraid to work hard for your country and care for your country's equipment as if it were your own. You've never been used to watching the clock and you've always been too busy to sit down and think what a fine, noble young fellow you are, how smart you are, how well educated you are, what fine family you are descended from and why you should be commanding this battery instead of being a section chief—if you only had your rights. What's your name?"

"Corporal Ed Parks, sir."

"You'll be Sergeant Ed Parks at retreat. See the supply sergeant and get your chevrons and have them sewed on today, so when you're made tonight you'll be wearing the insignia of your rank. See that you continue to earn them. You'll have competition. Get slack, and I'll bust you as quick as I've made you. Battery, *'tenshun!* Drivers and cannoneers! Prepare to mount! *Mount!* Gather your teams, you drivers,

and take up the slack on your tugs. Get your teams into the collars, so you'll not start with a jerk and pull a horse's shoulder out of whack. Right by section-n-n-s! Column right! Ho-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!"

You must understand, O'Malley, that there are two commands—the preparatory command and the command of execution. In the infantry the command of execution is "March!" but in the mounted service it's a sort of howl, long drawn, like a sad dog baying at the moon. The men understand "March!" readily enough, but the horses cannot. It takes time for six horses and a gun-carriage to get moving, and when the outfit moves to that howl it's like moving to music. The horses understand it better. Besides, you've got to shout long and loud to get your command over above the rattle and bang of an artillery outfit moving. There's the rumble of the carriages, the rattle of equipment, the jingle of trace-toggles and neck-yokes, the creak of harness and the clop-clop of about three hundred and fifty hoofs hitting the grit. Believe me, O'Malley, that's music, too.

I don't think I have ever enjoyed anything quite so much as field-artillery drill with the four gun sections. Sam Burwell would ride me out on the left flank, about midway between the column, with the guidon-bearer riding at our left and a little in the rear. A guidon, O'Malley, is a little scarlet silk flag, on an eight-foot staff, and on the flag is emblazoned in gold the crossed cannons with the battery number above and the regimental number below.

Sometimes we'd be in single column, then in column of sections, with each caisson—they carry ammunition

in the caissons—paralleled with the gun-carriage and its limber. Then we'd execute on right or left into line, with the guidon-bearer galloping across the front of the battery, according to whether the guide was right or left. Then we'd countermarch and do action left or right or front or rear, when the guns and caissons would be dropped, and the teams, with the limbers, would trot ahead, turn, come back and stand in the rear of the piece until it was time to limber again and move to a new position.

It was hard work and a fellow had to keep his head about him, but it was interesting work, because one never knew what evolution was coming next, and then, too, there was keen competition among the section crews to see who could do the job the smartest.

Sam Burwell had put the fear of God into them that first morning, and from that day forward the battery was out to earn his approval, not his condemnation. Really, it was laughable to see those section chiefs and gun and caisson corporals snap into their jobs after Sam took command. They got on the tails of the lead and swing drivers and rawhided them into keeping their teams in draft; they put more snap into their commands and shouted them louder. Believe me, O'Malley, that was Wake-up Day in our battery, particularly after the Old Man rode out and gave us the once-over.

Mounted drill only lasted an hour, but the men and horses were dripping with sweat when it was over. That first day the battery commander sent the battery in with the executive officer while he rode in with the Old Man.

"Well, son," said the Old Man, "how do you like them?"

"I love them," said Sam Burwell. "Why shouldn't I, sir? They're mine, aren't they? But they need a firm hand. Slack as the devil, I regret to say, from the executive officer down. The executive's bad, but he can be made good—and I'll make him. A bit spoiled before he got started, that's all. Just needs unspoiling, so I started working on him this morning. Faraday, my second, will never be worth the powder to blow him to hell. He'll never make a red-leg, but he does speak excellent French, so if the colonel can see his way clear to have that boy blooeyed abroad as an interpreter, and give me a shave-tail with less social standing and a head not quite so egg-shaped, I'll be obliged."

"I'll see what pull I have at headquarters," the Old Man promised. "I'm damned if I'll have any social or political favorites in my regiment. They'll hit the ball or they'll hit the trail for civil life. How are your non-coms?"

"Usual brand of college non-com. Life's just a lovely thing to them. They've absorbed the notion that they're superior cannon-fodder; all are ambitious for commissions, all are too proud to be good honest privates, all are slack, all are content just to get by, and all are critical of their superiors. What I want are the lads who went hunting for a job the day after they graduated from high school—the laddy-bucks who were too poor or too wise or too ambitious to waste the four loveliest years of their lives absorbing culture in college.

"Of course I have a few fine college men, who were taking technical courses; solid fellows, who worked their way through, lads with brains enough to know that a college education is the beginning and not the end of knowledge. Naturally they're headed for commissions. But, by and large, my college boys are going to be traded for rough-necks who have been butting their heads up against the world since their fifteenth birthday. I showed them up with a farmer this morning, and they didn't like it."

"Is that a government horse you're riding, Mr. Burwell?" says the Old Man.

"No, sir."

"Lucky for you, young man. I'd have ranked you out of him. He's too fine a charger for a junior captain. By the way, the commanding general was asking me about him, too.

"It seems your Private Givens, who speaks out of his turn, was riding him the day Carey was hurt—riding like the devil, too, to get medical aid for Carey. When the commanding general asked Givens what the hell he meant by running a government horse to death, Givens told him the animal belonged to him and he'd run him to death if he felt like it. I let Givens down easy for his impudence because nobody but an unthinking ass would have punished him after the enterprise and initiative he displayed in saving Carey's life, but I forgot to lecture him on the sinfulness of telling lies to his division commander."

"He told no lie, sir. This horse is his property."

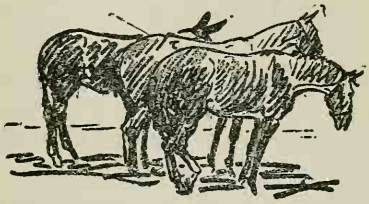
"Privates cannot maintain a private mount at government expense, Burwell. You know that."

"An officer can, and Private Givens has given me his horse—for the duration of the war."

"Hum-m-m!" says the Old Man. "Hum-m-m! I suppose you'll make him a corporal for that."

"No, sir. I'm going to make him a sergeant—for initiative and decision manifested in saving Captain Carey's life, and for extraordinary gallantry in telling the division commander where to head in. Meanwhile, the colonel, the commanding general, Private Givens and I are the only persons in the United States Army who know the ownership of this horse."

"There's luck in odd numbers," the Old Man mumbled, and rode away. His remark sounded mysterious.



CHAPTER XIII

I IMAGINE the outfit must have thought a wind storm had struck the battery street that night at retreat, because it was full of chevrons. My dear O'Malley, they fell like leaves in an autumn gale.

After retreat Sam Burwell, as was his habit, strolled down to the stables to give the animals the once-over and slip me an apple, but in reality, I think, to have a visit with Stable Sergeant Rogan under the guise of a semiofficial inspection.

"Sir," Rogan announced, "there's blood on the moon."

"There is, Rogan. I busted the new top sergeant tonight and put Dink Munro back where he belongs. Then I blew the authority out of four more nice young duty sergeants and warned half a dozen corporals. I also took a cleaver to the mess sergeant and I'll put the supply sergeant over the road as soon as I can select his successor."

"Well, any time the batthry commander doesn't like his stable sergeant," said Rogan innocently, "there's thim that'll be glad to take the nuisance off his hands and no questions asked."

Burwell grinned. Even Tip would have brayed at the idea of busting Rogan. "I've made that recruit, Givens, a sergeant," he said, and I really think he wanted Rogan's opinion of his action.

"An' ye did well, sir. Givens is a level-headed lad, free from shenanigans, wit' a sinse av humor, no proud flesh and a knowledge of men. He do have dignity and the gift av keepin' his mouth closed until he have something wort' while to say."

"He opened it pretty wide to the division commander."

"Thrue for the captain, he did—to say something wort' while! An' that's why I'm afther remarkin' that there's blood on the moon. The division commandher come prowling down to me stable late this afthernoon, all be himself. Up an' down the picket-line he roved, wit' me followin' at the heels of him, awaitin' his pleasure an' wondherin' what the divil he was up to. 'Sergeant,' says he finally, 'I'll have a look at that dappled mahogany horse wit' the silver p'ints. A Private Givens was ridin' him a while back, an' whin I questioned him about the animal he give me some opprobrious lip, so he did. Ye may have heard of the incident, Rogan.'

" 'I did not, sir,' says I, for I'd begun to have a cowld suspicion of what the ould vagabone was up to.

" 'Don't lie to me, Rogan,' says he. 'I've known ye since ye were a lead driver in Capron's battery at Santiago, an' if there's a bit of army scandal or gossip between this an' Washington, D. C., you'll know it first. Show me that horse.'

" 'Oh,' says I. 'Ye mean Captain Burwell's horse, I'm thinkin'. Wit' pleasure, sir. If the gineral'll shtep this way.' An' I led him into the Professor's box shtall.

" 'Lead him out till I have a good look at him,

Rogan,' says he; an' I led the Professor out. 'Glory be to Gawd,' says the ould fox, an' wint over the Professor an inch at a time. 'Glory be to Gawd!' says he whin he'd finished. 'Is this Captain Burwell a millionaire that he can afford a charger like that fella?'

" 'He do have barrels of it, sor,' says I.

" 'These rich civilian officers'll be the ruin o' the army, Rogan,' says he, an' wint his way, an' bad cess to his shadow."

"What do you suppose he had in his mind, Rogan?"

"Divil a hair I know, but 'twas something unpleasant. He'll be for buyin' the Professor off the captain, figurin' that if he offers a fine price the captain'll not have the guts to refuse to sell to the division commandher, for fear av bein' thransferred to a post where he'll have no use for the animal."

"I'll see him in hell first," said Sam Burwell.

"Not only that, sir, but I'd push him in, for the captain."

Just then Ern Givens came around the corner, and my heart thrilled to see the new sergeant's chevrons on his left arm. He saluted the battery commander.

"Sir," he says, "I'm grateful for the chevrons, but the battery commander has made a mistake. I know nothing of soldiering, sir. These chevrons belong on a more experienced man."

"The man's been born insubordinate," says our Sam to Rogan. "Sergeant Givens, I admit you know nothing of soldiering, but, thank God, you have common sense and the native ability to make good. You know as much as the next sergeant, so wear your chevrons with dignity and in the fulness of time I'll teach you

your trade or as much as I know of it myself. Don't look so worried, man."

"I've been up to see the division commander, sir. It seems he went hunting for me in the divisional stockade this afternoon, thinking I was a general prisoner there, and when they couldn't find me on the stockade rolls he sent a motorcycle orderly over here for me. The top ordered me to report to the commanding general at once, so I rode back in the bathtub with the orderly."

"What did I tell the captain?" said Rogan. "There's blood on the moon."

"He asked you if you owned this horse, didn't he?" said Burwell.

"Yes, sir."

"I hope you lied like a soger," said Rogan.

"I'm not a good hand at lying, Sergeant Rogan. I told him the horse had been mine the day I first made his acquaintance, but that I had since given him to my battery commander."

"God help us," wailed Rogan, and hid his face in his hands. "He's spilled the beans."

"I know I have, Rogan, but I didn't know it until the commanding general informed me it was against army regulations for a commissioned officer to accept a present from an enlisted man, in consequence of which the gift was null and void, and I'd have to take the horse back and get him off the reservation, otherwise he'd have Captain Burwell court-martialed.

"That scared me and I asked him if there wasn't some way the thing could be squared, because the gift had been made in all innocence. So he said he had no desire to embarrass my battery commander but added

that he didn't see how he could avoid embarrassing me, because I would probably be unable to find a place to park my horse on such short notice. So I flared up and told him I'd never yet seen the photograph of the man that could embarrass me and that I could sell my horse if I wanted to.

" 'Well, then,' he said, 'suppose you sell him to me. I'll give you two thousand dollars for him, my man. I want him for my daughter. She can win in any horse show with him.' "

Stable Sergeant Rogan made a leap for Ern Givens and drew back his fist. Really I thought he was going to punch Ern.

"An' what did you say to that indecent proposal?" he roared. "Answer me that, you son of a thousand tumbleweeds, an' if ye don't give me the right answer I'll break ye in two halves, so I will."

"There'll be no rough-house, Rogan," Ern told him quietly. "I'm of equal rank with you and I've picked better men than you apart to see what made them act funny. I told the commanding general that I preferred to sell my horse to my battery commander."

"If you were a young leddy I'd kiss ye for that," Rogan cried happily. "That inded it, of course."

"It did not. The commanding general said, 'Givens, I'll be frank. I don't like you.' I told him I'd split fifty-fifty with him on that and he yelled: 'Silence! You're insolent and insubordinate! I thought I'd had your clock fixed once for insolence and insubordination, but it appears that through some collusion at your regimental headquarters you have escaped me. But you'll not escape me again. Now, then, answer me

this. Are you reasonably fond of this battery commander of yours?'

"I told him I was, that the captain was a gentleman and treated me man-fashion.

" 'Hum-m-m!' he grunted. 'The army's been going to hell ever since the President pulled that line about making the world safe for democracy. That damned slogan is ruining our discipline. It's getting so now that an enlisted man thinks he's as good as an officer, and *that's* why you're impudent and without proper respect for your superiors. However, enough of that. Do you like the field artillery?'

"I told him I did and that I had volunteered so I could select my own branch of the service.

" 'Fond of your battery—loyal to it?' he asked me next.

"I told him I was and when he asked me why, I told him that it was because I thought it the best battery in the regiment with the best top sergeant and the best battery commander. So then he said:

" 'Would you like to leave it—say for a baking company, or the sanitary corps, which buries the dead, or for the medical corps or the remount service? I believe you'd be a good man for the remount service. The only trouble about that, however, is that you probably wouldn't get overseas.'

" 'Hell, no!' I told him.

" 'No vulgarity,' he commanded. 'Well, if you want to sell that horse of yours to your commanding general—and remember, I'll give you two thousand dollars for him—I think I have pull enough to see that you remain with your battery.' "

Stable Sergeant Rogan applied a terrible epithet to that commanding general. I wouldn't even repeat it in the presence of an innocent little pony like Taffy.

("Don't spare me," Taffy retorted. "I'm little but I'm tough." O'Malley winked at me and I went on with my story.)

"The old man's a bit dirty, isn't he?" said Sam Burwell. "Well, if he wants to put the screws on you, Sergeant Givens, nobody but God Almighty or the secretary of war can stop him. What answer did you give to his proposal?"

"I just stood to attention and stared at him and called him what he is—with my eyes."

"Not a peep out of you, avic," crooned Rogan.

"Nary peep."

"And did he get the message?"

"He did. He turned as red as a box car, and his gaze flinched. Then he said, 'Well, what branch of the service, other than the field artillery, would you prefer, Givens?'

" 'The sanitary corps, sir,' I replied.

" 'That's not so pleasant, Givens,' he warned me.

" I'll take a chance, sir,' said I. 'I've always been lucky and in my capacity as grave-digger I might some day have the pleasure of burying a general officer.'

" 'Meaning me, I suppose,' he says.

" 'I've had my lesson, sir,' I shot back at him. 'Never again will I get personal with a division commander. It's unlucky.'

" 'Your talents would be wasted digging graves, Givens. Evidently you're a horseman, so go back to your battery and think it over. If you decide to sell,

name your price—within reason, of course—and report to me with the horse at ten o'clock tomorrow morning. At ten-one it will be too late and you'll be transferred to the Remount Service. Dismissed!' "

Sam Burwell leaned his head up against my neck and quivered with rage.

"There are not many men like that in the army—thank God," said Rogan; "but even the army can't be free of skunks, and a skunk that man was from the cradle up."

"I won't be driven," Ern Givens cried passionately. "It's the Remount Service for me. Captain Burwell, sir, here's a bill of sale for my horse. Give me a dollar, sir. I'd give him to the captain if it wasn't for the goddamned regulations, but a dollar will make the transfer legal."

Ern's voice had been growing huskier and huskier. I looked around at him now and saw that his mouth was twitching and eyes closed, but not tight enough to keep back the tears of rage and sorrow.

"And when the war is over," he gritted to Rogan, "there'll be a new face whining around the devil—if that general and I survive."

"I want you, Sergeant Givens," Sam Burwell pleaded. "I need you worse than I need the Professor. Nobody can buck the old army game when it's dealt from the bottom of the deck, Sergeant, so don't try. Charge him twenty-five hundred dollars for the Professor. The commanding general has a rich wife and he'll pay it. He's horse crazy. Come, Sergeant, don't leave the old outfit. We appreciate you here. I need men like you, I tell you. We like you."

But Ern Givens only held out his hand with the bill of sale clutched between thumb and forefinger. "Please give me a dollar, sir," he gasped. "Don't make it hard. I'll do anything for my battery commander except crawl in the dirt for him. By God, I'm a man and I've never done that yet. It breaks my heart to leave but—I'm going. The dollar, sir, please."

So Sam Burwell took out a dollar bill and handed it to Ern. Then Ern took my head in his arms and rubbed his cheek against my muzzle, so Stable Sergeant Rogan and the battery commander walked away and left us alone together. Oh, how badly I wanted to talk to Ern, to beg him to sell me to the division commander and the first time the old animal mounted me would be his last day on earth. But horses can't talk to men, even though they can understand their language, so all I could do was stand there, with my head down a little, while those beloved fingers roved over my head, scratching me between the ears and up under the jaw-bones. . . . And after a while Ern kissed me on the nose and went out of the box stall. . . .

I heard the door slam. I've heard other things slam since—notably a 265-centimeter shell that dropped in on our picket-line one night and spattered me with the blood and fragments of eight comrades—but shells only slam in a fellow's ears, while that box-stall door slammed in my heart.

O'Malley, I couldn't believe Ern was gone. I felt certain the commanding general was bluffing and that Ern had called his bluff. So I waited hopefully until after mess-call next morning, thinking he'd look in on me. But he didn't come. Drill-call went at seven-

thirty but he wasn't with his section when we pulled out of park. Recall from morning drill went at eleven-thirty, but—he didn't come. At four-thirty recall from afternoon drill sounded. He didn't come.

At six o'clock the massed bugles blew retreat and To the Colors and the band played The Anthem while the flag came fluttering down. I knew he'd be through for the day then. But still he didn't come. The sweet, merry, rippling notes of tattoo went at nine o'clock and cheered me, but—he didn't come. The call to quarters went at nine-thirty and I gave up hope. When the bugles sang taps, which is the soldier's good night, and I saw the light switched off in Rogan's harness-room, I whinnied for my master. Yes, I whinnied long and loud, as a fretful, frightened horse will, and I tried to kick the back out of the barn, so I could escape and find Ern.

"What the hell's the row about?" Old Tip brayed from the end of the barn. "You big rookie, don't you know taps has went? Pipe down!"

"They've sent Ern Givens to Remount, Tip," I screamed.

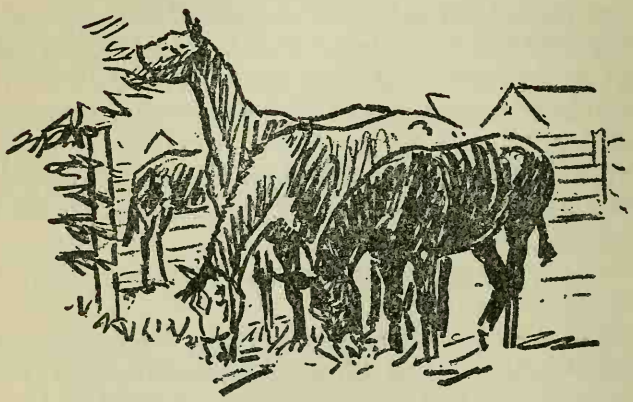
"Tell me about it in the morning, Prof. No use screaming your head off in this man's army. I'm sorry. Good night."

Tip was always philosophic!

Those bugles! The first call always came from division headquarters, then the buglers of the guard in each unit took it up in succession and it ran around the huge oval camp. Half-way round I could scarcely hear the calls, then they came closer and closer again until presently our own bugler of the guard stepped out

in front of the mill and said good night to the ——th.

Good night! It was good night to them, but to me that bugle sang "Good-by-y-y-y-y-y, good-by-y-y-y, good-by, Ern! Good-by, Ern, good-by, Ern! Play the game! Play-the-game! Buck-a-roo!"



CHAPTER XIV

O'MALLEY'S warm Irish heart was quite full as he listened to my recital of the parting between Ern Givens and me. Indeed, had he been a man instead of a horse, I think he would have wept. He compromised by walking out from under the weeping willow where we were yarning, and pretending to crop some grass in the pasture. Even the Welsh pony, Taffy, who is a rattle-brained and not particularly amiable little personality, was impressed; at least he forbore comment and it is a cold day, indeed, when Taffy cannot be depended upon to speak out of his turn. Indeed, as I told my story, the memory of that bitter night returned to me with some of its old poignancy and I was glad of the break in the recital which the thoughtful and sympathetic Charles O'Malley provided.

Presently O'Malley got himself in hand and came back to his place. He swore great Irish oaths—"Be the Rock av Cashel" and "Be the Great Gun av Athlone"—and finally expressed the hope that Stable Sergeant Rogan, being a Celt, had had the forethought to put the Black Curse on that cold-hearted bully of a division commander.

As to that, O'Malley (I resumed), I cannot say, but I do remember quite clearly that Rogan's face was

black as a thunderhead when he led me out and tied me in the sunshine on the picket-line next morning. He groomed me himself that morning, so I knew he loved me, if not for my own sake, then for my lost master's, for the years had been long since Rogan had groomed a horse. It was his job, as stable sergeant, to make the privates do the work, and he was responsible to the battery commander that they did it well. Having made my toilet, the excellent fellow appeared to have no further interest in his job. He sat down on an upturned bucket before the harness-room door and his setter dog Jeff, realizing that his master was troubled of soul, sneaked over to him, with many a wistful smile and apologetic wag of his tail, and thrust his muzzle into Rogan's cupped hands. So Rogan drew Jeff in between his knees and held him there, and then the stable sergeant began to talk.

It was a public scandal to hear him. Indeed, for the things Rogan said about the commanding general then, he could have been given a general court-martial and tucked away on Alcatraz Rock for twenty years. Being a canny old warrior, however, Rogan said them to Jeff and was careful not to mention names. Even Tip was interested. He told me afterward that to his certain knowledge and belief mule-skinners were good at ground and lofty cursing, that the men of a mountain-howitzer battery, which is transported on pack-mules, are better, but that Rogan's language made all the cussing of mule-skinners and mountain-howitzer men the mere innocent prattle of babies in comparison.

Rogan prayed that the commanding general might never know a restful night, that a plague of cooties

would descend upon him and build nests in his ears; that his wife might nag him, that baboons might bite him, that moral, physical and financial ruin might overtake him; that— But it would take at least half an hour to enumerate all the misfortunes Rogan prayed a just God to inflict on that commanding general.

Then, quite suddenly, dear old Rogan commenced to laugh and hugged Jeff to his heart. "We'll let him know what honest sogers think av the likes av him, Jeff, darlin'," he crooned. "He wants to borrow you tomorrow, me lad, to go quail-shootin'. Divil a birrd will that black-leg ever shoot over you ag'in, Jeff, if ye never smelt a quail from now till I bury ye."

"Easy, Rogan, easy," said the battery commander, who had just turned the corner of the barn in time to hear Rogan's prophecy and promise. "If the commanding general asks for the loan of your dog it would be the part of wisdom to oblige him. Dogs are not permitted in camp and you know it. You're disobeying a general order by maintaining Jeff, and the only reason you get away with your disobedience is because the commanding general likes to shoot over Jeff."

"He'll shoot no more over me little Jeff dog, sir," growled Rogan.

"Then you'll have to get rid of Jeff."

"I've thought of that, sir. I know where to sind him where he'll be well took care of and hunted a bit by a decent gintleman."

"But you'll miss the delight of having him with you, Rogan."

"I can shtand more than most men. God knows I've proved that in my day, sir."

"Most enlisted men would leap at the opportunity to loan their dog to their commanding general, Rogan."

"I'm an old soger, sir. I lick no boots. To hell wid him. May Satan sind a corporal's guard of guardhouse divils to fly away wit' that ould piece av putrified putty, if they only flew a foot a day. When he sinds his ordherly over afther Jeff, faith I'll tell the ordherly to convey me respectful djooty to the commandhin' gineral an' to say that Stable Sergeant Patrick Rogan has too much respect for himself an' his dog to oblige the likes av him."

Sam Burwell was distressed. "But you cannot offer your commanding general a gratuitous insult, Rogan. You know very well the commanding general's request is always tantamount to an order."

"Thrue for the captain. But wan may not be thried for refusin' to obey a request. For the last time I say, 'To hell wid him.' He's an incompetent bully an' a disgrace to the serrvice."

"Rogan," Sam Burwell pleaded, "you know I don't want to lose you. Suppose the old skunk takes a notion to blooey you to Remount?"

"In that evint Remount will be the gainer by another good man. I tell ye, Captain, I'm bound to let that scut know what an honest enlisted man thinks of him. Shoot over me dog he shall not. Didn't Givens defy him? What kind of a man would I be to give in to him, thin? I'll not let Givens outdo me, the poor man, in manliness an' courage."

"Oh, I can see your point of view, you wild, stubborn Mick," Sam Burwell pleaded, "and I honor you for it, Rogan. But it will not get you anywhere."

Rogan grinned cunningly. "It may get me to Remount, an' to rebuke that big stuffed blouse of dog-robbin', malingerin', know-nothin' I'd simmer in hell an' cheer at the prospect. If he sinds me away I'll know I've stung him. Captain Burwell, sir, can ye imagine anything worse nor havin' to stomach an insult from an enlisted man?"

"I wouldn't stomach it. I'd fight him."

"That's a pleasure I'm denied, av coorse. Well, let what will come. God'll be me comfortin'."

"You sacrilegious old pagan, will you let the commanding general have your dog, for my sake?"

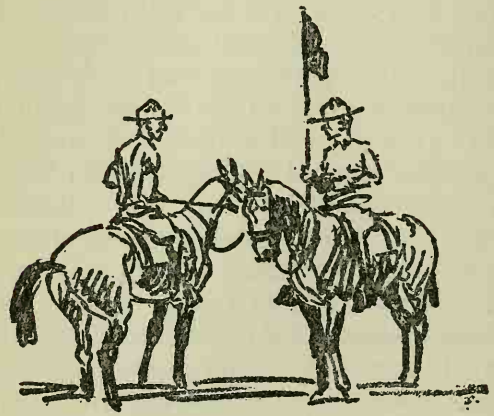
"It breaks my heart to refuse the captain, but whilst refusing him he may lose me, in the long run he'll get me back ag'in. The day this regiment entrains for a port av embarkation, an ordher from Washington—shtraight over the top av that laddy-buck's head—will thransfer me back to this batthery ag'in, as sure as pussy is a cat, an' divil a worrd av lie in that! I'm only an enlisted man but I have friends in high places. They're ginerals now, but wanst they was shave-tails an' captains. They know the sort av man I am, sir; some av thim are not above shakin' hands wit' me. Hoo-roo! To hell wid him, says I. There's an assistant adjutant gineral that'll remember the man that carried him on his back down to Siboney from San Juan Hill. Sure, I was young an' shtrong as a bull in thim days. I could go a week wit'out food an' three days without wather, an' as luck would have it that day me canteen contained a liquid no wounded man despises. 'Musha, now, Private Rogan,' says he, the poor lad, 'what have we here?'

" 'Wather wit' a little whisky in it, sir,' says I.

" 'Ye lie,' says he. ' 'Tis whisky wit' a little wather in it. How?' says he. Sure he was fightin' dhrunk be the time I dumped him in on the docthor."

"So you think a wire to him will do the trick, eh?"

"I'm sure of it, sir. He has a pint of me blood in his veins. He'd lost so much av his I give him some av mine—an' good, clane blood the docthors said it was. No, that man will not forget."



CHAPTER XV

SOMEHOW the week dragged to an end. We were working hard and while ordinarily I would not have had an appetite for my forage, Tip helped to create one by informing me that I hadn't seen the last of Ern Givens—not by a long shot. He assured me Ern would come over from the Remount station on Sundays to see me and visit his friends in the battery, and as I had discovered by this time that Tip rarely sounded off until he knew what he was talking about, I lived in high hopes of a visit from Ern on Sunday.

Saturday comes before Sunday. Early Saturday morning a headquarters orderly on a motorcycle with a side-car came roaring down our battery street and out to the horse lines. He swung around the corner of the stables in a cloud of dust, and half the horses on the picket-line snorted and squatted and reared. And he almost ran over Rogan.

"Ye born eedjit," Rogan roared. He grabbed that motorcyclist by the scruff of the neck, jerked him off and shook him. "What do ye mane by scarin' me horses an' runnin' over ye're milithry betthers, bad cess to ye, ye baboon-faced recruit?"

"I'm from division headquarters," the orderly yelled, as if that explained anything or gave him the right to run down battery streets and frighten horses.

"Get back to division headquarters before I break

the back av ye in two halves," Rogan roared. "What do ye want at my stables?"

"I want Stable Sergeant Rogan's dog for the commanding general."

"I'm Stable Sergeant Rogan and I'm not linding me dog to the commandin' gineral. Tell him I'm particular what society me well-bred little setther keeps. He's not accustomed to hunt wit' curs. Clear out av this!"

The orderly cleared out—slowly. Of course he was incensed at Rogan and of course Rogan was incensed at him for arriving like a tornado and disturbing the picket-line. I imagine if Rogan hadn't been angry he would have couched his message in words more respectful; I imagine, too, that if the orderly hadn't been rough-housed he would not have carried Rogan's message word for word, which I greatly fear he did. Tip said he would, and subsequent events seemed to bear out this prophecy.

An hour later Sam Burwell came down to stables with a sheet of paper in his hand. "Rogan," he said grimly, "here's a memorandum from the chief of staff, calling my attention to the violation of paragraph A, general order No. 231, with reference to dogs on this military reservation. I am to report within the hour what action I have taken in regard to said dog."

"Jeff will be crated and expressed within the hour, sir," said Rogan, saluting.

"Thank you, Rogan. And here's another order transferring Stable Sergeant Patrick Rogan to the Remount Service."

"I'm packed an' ready to go, sir."

"Oh, Rogan, Rogan, this is terrible." Sam Burwell almost wept. "What am I going to do for a stable sergeant now?"

"That new sergeant, Ed Parks, sir. He's a good man an' what he don't know he'll learn. I'll come over from Remount from time to time and lecture him a bit, sir, on the little things a man learrns only from experience. Am I to have transportation to Remount, sir, or must I march in me pack?"

"I'll take you over, Rogan. Saddle Dandy and the Professor right after midday mess. I have a notion I'd like to see how Givens is getting along and I want to put in a good word for you both with the officer commanding Remount."

"Thank the captain."

So after mess (we only drilled half a day on Saturday) Rogan strapped his kit on Dandy's saddle, and he and the battery commander mounted up and rode over to Remount. I noticed that Rogan was carrying something in his blue denim barrack bag, holding it before him in his lap and leaning far back on the cantle.

"Your laundry, I suppose, Rogan," said Sam Burwell.

"Yes, sir," said Rogan; and at that moment the bundle squirmed and twitched, and Jeff's complaining bark came out of it. Sam Burwell said nothing, for he had been in the service long enough to know that the officer who sees too much is a fool. He had obeyed orders and got Jeff out of his battery, so what happened to Jeff after that was none of his business.

We walked all the way over to the Remount station,

out of deference to Jeff, and tied up to the breeze in front of the commandant's little office. Rogan went inside to report and present his authority for so doing, and Sam Burrell went in with him to tell the commandant that the latter's gain was his loss.

While Dandy and I were waiting outside, Ern Givens came through a corral gate. I smelled him, even before I saw him and heard his voice.

"Professor!" he called, and I leaped a low fence and ran to meet him. What a joy! I put my head down over his shoulder and he laid his cheek against my neck and talked to me and told me he was coming over to see me on Sunday morning. So you see Tip was right again. In fact, Tip was always right.

When Rogan and Sam Burwell came out of the commandant's office presently Sam looked around, saw that nobody was near to be a witness to his lack of official dignity and gave Ern a hearty hand-shake. Ern, of course, knew by this time that an officer should not shake hands with an enlisted man, because, with few exceptions, it is very subversive of discipline, since an officer cannot shake hands with an enlisted man today and bawl him out for a dereliction of duty tomorrow. However, there are rare exceptions. In fact, I had seen our colonel shake hands with Rogan one day—in the seclusion of the harness-room. It seems they'd been through a number of stormy passages together and hadn't seen each other for a long time. Then, too, Rogan was an old, old soldier and had acquired privileges.

Ern was mighty pleased when our battery commander shook his hand. It made him feel he had a true friend in the army.

"It's mighty nice of the captain to make me this visit in my exile," said Ern. "I sure do appreciate it. And you too, Sergeant Rogan."

"Hell's fire, lad, I'm a sergeant no longer," Rogan grinned. "Whin a man is thransferred he's always busted to private, so since I've been sint over here to keep you company, 'tis a private I am—like yourself." He let Jeff out of the barrack bag, and Jeff jumped up on Ern and kissed his hand. I'll be shot if the old pup didn't recognize him!

"You had a run-in with division headquarters, Rogan?" Ern asked, and Rogan told him what had happened. And then these two looked at each other with little grim grins, and even a fool could see that from that moment forward they were to be buddies—or bunkies as Tip called them, employing the phraseology of an elder day.

It was inevitable that they should together plumb the depths of comradeship, for they were much alike in temperament, although of different racial stocks and background. Those two had in common something that (as Tip expressed it that night) makes for the building of empires, and this was guts and undying loyalty to a principle. They hated all that was mean and unmanly and cruel; to die, trying to suppress a bully, would have been a joy to either.

They were primitive men, simple men, men who thought straight and talked straight and acted straight, men who could be depended upon to do a job and do it well, since not to do the job well would have convicted them, in their own hearts, of being treacherous and unreliable. Oh, yes, O'Malley, there are men like that in this world. Not so many, but enough to make your

heart swell with pride in them, enough to make one feel that all the squealers and quitters and swankers and rebels against organized society are just a nuisance but never a menace.

Ern Givens held out his hand to Patrick Rogan. Rogan pressed it hard and said:

"Well, what sort av a layout have we here, Ernie, me lad?"

He called my dear master Ernie. That showed he thought a lot of him.

"Oh, it's just like working on a ranch busting broomtails, Pat. We have reveille and retreat, but no drill. The officers work about as hard as the enlisted men, and there isn't any effort made to be military. We stand to attention and give the Old Man a salute when he comes around in the morning and then forget it for the rest of the day. We're all horsemen here, and between men who are fond of horses or dogs there's always a certain human fellowship. We have a couple of hundred animals on sick report all the time, and when you're fussing with a sick horse you forget you're a soldier. I ride about six bad ones daily. That's my specialty; then I turn them over to other men to halter-break and bit and handle. We have some mighty good men here—real cow-men. I'm not happy here but I'm at home."

"Hum-m-m!" said Rogan. "Well, I never was much of a hand at ridin' an angry horse, but whin it comes to sittin' up all night wit' a sick animal an' dhrenchin' him wit' medicine an' knowin' be instinct what's wrong wit' the poor baste, I'll take a back seat from no man."

"You've forgotten more about horses than most veterinaries know," said Sam Burwell. "I've told your commanding officer what a wonderful farrier you are, Rogan, and likewise, I've put in a good word for you, Givens. He'll be making you both non-coms before long."

Well, we all visited a little while and then, with a hand-shake all around we parted, and the last I saw of Ern Givens and Rogan for many a day they were hiking off to quarters, with little Jeff trotting along at Rogan's heels. I had gathered from the conversation that the commanding general seldom visited or inspected the Remount station, so Rogan was going to take a chance and maintain his dog there until he got caught. Evidently the commanding officer of the station was a dog man, too, because I saw a collie dog asleep on his front porch, and there was a stubby-tailed mongrel sniffing around among the horses milling in the corral.

CHAPTER XVI

SAM BURWELL rode Dandy back to the General Hospital at Fort Sill and I trotted along behind him. Miss Mary Vardon was waiting for us there, so I knelt and she mounted me and we went for a long ride up toward the Wichita National Forest. Sam told Mary all about the loss of his two good men and why, and she was furious and said that the next time they had a dance over at the hospital and the commanding general asked her for a dance (it seems he had a habit of asking her several times at every dance) she'd refuse him.

"And if he persists, as he probably will, Professor, darling," she said, giving me a pat on the neck, "I'll tell him what I think of him."

"Careful, Mary," Sam warned. "You're in the army now."

"Nevertheless, my dear," said Mary, laughing, "I'm a woman and I can get away with murder. We nurses are not supposed to be so military that we must hold that punctured balloon in awe. Besides, I'm not in his jurisdiction."

"I wish I were not," Sam sighed. "He'll try to buy my horse, of course. He has one soldierly quality. He doesn't quit readily. And of course I cannot sell him the Professor at any price, and of course, too, when my colonel recommends me for another promotion, and

the brigadier endorses the application favorably, the commanding general will probable veto it. I fear it was an unlucky day for me when I met the Professor."

"You met me the same day, didn't you?" Mary rebuked him.

That shut Sam Burwell up.

"Well?" Mary pressed for an answer.

"I can afford to lose my grand men, of course. Soldiers are always expendable, but wives are not. No, Mary, I cannot afford to lose you."

"When your regiment is sent abroad, dear," Mary inquired, "what will you do with the Professor?"

"I'll return him to Private Givens at the Remount station. While it's against regulations for an enlisted man to maintain his private mount at government expense, the fact remains that Givens is doing a lot of rough-riding over there and he could use a grand hazing horse like the Professor. He tells me there isn't a decent hazing horse in the Remount corrals, so I imagine the commanding officer of the Remount station will wink at a breach of the law that helps along his job. Most officers do—if they expect to get anywhere. Red tape won't do in war-time."

"But if Private Givens should be ordered abroad also?"

"I do not think he will. If he should be, it will probably be to care for horses and mules on a transport, and when that work is done he will be ordered back. He's too valuable a man here—knows too much about breaking horses. The horses sent to France are supposed to have been broken before shipment, you understand. So Givens will probably fight the war in no

graver danger than that of being thrown and rolled on or bitten—and he's used to taking those chances in civil life. If he has to get rid of the Professor, I'll instruct him to pay the expressage. Then if Givens survives the war he will know where to find his horse; if he does not survive the war and I do, *I* will know where to find the Professor again. It's all quite simple."

"I wish I might have the Professor for my very own," Mary replied.

"If you survive the war, darling, we'll see what arrangements can be made with Givens."

"No, we'll not. I was merely wishing, my dear. There will be no attempt to separate him and his horse. There's been much too much of that already, Sam."

That was Mary Vardon—one of the grandest feminine sports that ever lived. My heart rejoiced that she was going to be our Sammy's mate; even dour old Dandy was having a few thoughts on the subject just then.

"The get of these two should be thoroughbreds, Prof," he nickered to me. "Oh, Lord, I wonder what will become of me when this war is over. I've led a dog's life since I was foaled and I *would* like to drop into something soft."

"You'll drop into the cavalry, old son," I assured him. "You're at least half thoroughbred and a perfect cavalry mount. I heard Rogan say so. Tip tells me life in the cavalry is easier than in the field artillery, unless we should have war with Mexico. Tip says that would be a cavalry campaign, and the wastage in horses would be frightful. He was there with Per-

shing's punitive expedition in 1916, so he should know."

"That old hybrid's been everywhere and seen everything," Dandy complained.

"Well, as Tip explains it himself, Dandy, they don't send green recruits where there's real work to be done."

"I often wonder what will eventually become of old Tip. He's bound to wear out sometime, although I hear that mules live to be forty or fifty years old."

"Tip will be retired after thirty years of service. He says it's the custom. Mules and horses have service records, you know, and you bet that the day Tip has been in service thirty years the battery clerk will remind the battery commander of it. The battery commander will then take the matter up with the Old Man, and there'll be a dress parade of the entire regiment, with the stable sergeant leading Tip at the head of the parade. And he'll be wearing a bright new blanket with his medals and his services and wound stripes on it. Yes, sir, that day Tip will be honored. He'll lead the regiment—all four firing batteries, the battery trains and the regimental train.

"At the last Tip will debouch into a position by the reviewing stand, and the Old Man will stand beside him and hold his halter, while the regiment passes in review—not for the Old Man, but for Tip! Perhaps, then, the regiment will be massed and the Old Man will make a speech and tell his men of old Tip's service and his honorable wounds acquired on foreign battle-fields. Probably he'll tell his men to emulate Tip, who never quit, never flunked his job and was always faithful.

"Then the band will play 'Aloha!' and Tip will be led off the parade ground to live the life of Riley—all play and no work and a nice pasture to frolic in until he dies. And when he dies he will be mentioned again in regimental orders and hauled to his grave on the horse ambulance and have taps and the three volleys and a headstone erected over him. And part of the fatigue for the guard-house soldiers will be to keep his grave green."

"I don't believe it," Dandy declared.

"I do, Dandy," I replied. "Did you ever hear of Old Putnam? No? Well, I have. I heard Rogan telling the battery commander about him, and Tip verifies the story. Tip and Rogan should know, because they were both at Peking. Old Putnam was a big brown, weighing about thirteen hundred pounds—a wheel gunner in Reilly's battery. His teammates were all casualties, but Old Putnam sneaked into the collar and all by himself did the work of six horses. Yes, sir, he hauled that heavy gun up a hill and into the firing position. He was cited for it and decorated for conspicuous gallantry in action over and above the call of duty, and when the battery got back to Manila Old Putnam was honorably retired by order of the secretary of war. And maybe you don't think Old Putnam lived the life of Riley after that. He always led the regiment at reviews."

"What became of him, Prof?"

"Tip says his teeth finally went back on him and he couldn't digest his fodder. He failed dreadfully, of course, and when it was seen that the old hero was slowly starving to death the colonel ordered a soldier's

death for Old Putnam—a bullet between the eyes—and they buried him with full military honors."

"Cripes, Prof, I hadn't any idea horses and mules were appreciated so much in the army."

"Tip says that any soldier—whether he walks on two feet or four—is appreciated if he does his duty. It's a kind of religion, this soldiering business, Dandy. It's the religion of loyalty, and you've got to be ready to die for your faith and not cut up any mock heroics about it, either."

So we chatted between ourselves, while Sam and Mary chattered about the things that interested them, and along about sunset we came back to Fort Sill and after delivering Mary at the hospital we jogged back to Camp Doniphan.

"Hello, old kid," Tip brayed, as we trotted up to the barn, "have you heard the good news?"

Of course I hadn't and I told him so.

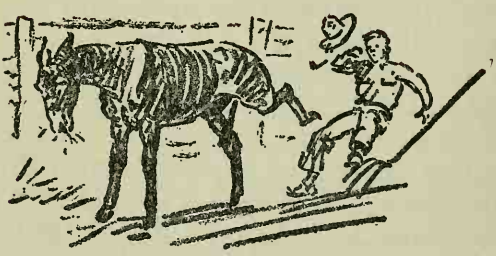
"The division's ordered abroad. Hee-haw, hee-haw!" And old Tip put his head down between his legs and threw his hind end aloft in a transport of delight. "By the corn of Missouri, I'm weary of this barrack soldiering. It makes one soft. I want to hear the guns barking again before I die. I want to hear the put-put-put-put of machine-guns and the crack-crackle of rifle fire. I want to see the wounded coming down from the front. I want to see the dead in the grass again—and me packing ammunition up to those hungry guns."

"You bloodthirsty old wretch," Dandy reproved him. "For the love of green grass—why?"

"It's life," Tip brayed. "Life! It's where you see

boys made into men; it's where you see the Pert Haverses of this world in all their gaudy yellow; it's where you find out Who's Who and Why. Over the hills and across the fields, swimming rivers, eating and drinking when you can, doing the job you've been trained to do and doing it well. Haw-w-w!" And he pranced and bucked like a colt.

Queer old cuss, Tip!



CHAPTER XVII

WELL, Tip was right again—as usual. That mule seemed to live with his long ears to the ground, for he could hear more rumors than the colonel's orderly. Of course he heard a lot of rumors that were figments of some blatherskite soldier's hectic imagination, but he was too old a soldier and much too wise to assimilate these.

It takes time to move a division. The number of trains that have to be provided and the work of routing them takes weeks of preparation. We'd had our target practice before our regiment received its orders, and after that we drilled no more. Just a little setting-up exercise to keep the men fit, for there was much work to do getting ready to entrain. The battery property had to be inspected, checked, marked and crated; the men had to undergo another searching physical examination, which developed some weaklings that the training had broken down. Dink Munro and the battery commander worked late every night, making out reports and returns, assigning baggage details and studying the method of entraining and detraining the troops rapidly, lecturing to them, seeing that no single detail was omitted.

Pretty soon I observed that Tip was getting nervous and I asked him why.

"I have a foreboding of evil, Prof," he answered.

"Nobody is paying any attention to us. No spare horseshoes being crated, no effort made to box and ship the forge and the farrier's equipment, no sign of a final inspection of the animals, and not a sign of getting the guns and caissons ready to load on the flat cars. Frankly, I don't like it. I have a suspicion we're all going to be left behind, and if that happens to me, I'm going to go bad. I'll become a balky mule and never do an honest day's soldiering again until they retire me. By the corn of Missouri, it isn't fair."

Tip was right. One morning the drivers, the gun and caisson non-coms and the men of the battery commander's detail were marched down to the picket-line. Every man saddled his horse and mounted. Then the cannoneers placed the halter-shanks of the lead horses and mules in the hands of the mounted men, and away we all went. And we never saw that picket-line again.

The battery commander was riding me and I saw that he was quite depressed. He led the outfit across country to the Remount station, and there the men unsaddled and removed the bridles and head-stalls and stowed them in a quartermaster's truck that had followed us. This done, all the battery horses and mules were turned loose in one of the hundreds of corrals—all but Tip and me. Dear old Rogan was on hand to look after him, and Ern Givens was there to receive me.

"It's hard on us, so it is, Tip, me bhoy," Rogan murmured, and I could see that he was profoundly affected. "A grand big brute of a war on in France and us two out of it! Well, never mind, Tip"—and he rubbed the mealy nose—"I'm not going to see an

old soger like you turned in with the rabble. 'Tis the company of yer equals ye'll keep and sleep in a barn at night and have the attintion you've always been used to. I'll not have ye associating wit' a lot of wild rookie mules and mustangs that'll gang ye and kick daylights out of ye in a scrap. And little Jeff is here to sleep in the shtall wit' ye, as of ould."

Sam Burwell handed Ern Givens a wad of bills, shook his hand, mumbled something about never forgetting him and then walked abruptly away so the men could not see how badly he felt. He did not say good-by to Rogan. He couldn't. He had known him so long and had so much affection for him, as a man, and so much admiration for him as a soldier, that he would have showed it. Rogan understood.

"God bless ye, lad," he called at the battery commander. "God bless ye an' bring ye honors an' quick promotion, dhry camps an' good rations, an' may the poultice-wallopers never get their hands on ye."

Sam just waved his hand without looking back. Then all the men said good-by to Ern and Rogan, and climbed on top of the saddles and equipment on the truck, and went bumping away along the dusty road and out of our lives. Ern and Rogan stood looking after them a little while, then turned and grinned painfully at each other.

"Well, Pat," said Ern presently, "isn't it high time you worked that rabbit's foot of yours on your assistant adjutant-general friend in Washington? The battery will be entraining for a port of embarkation tomorrow or the day after."

"I've worked it already, Ernie, me son—and it

back-fired on me," Rogan confessed. "The day after I was thransferred here I wrote him all about us, confidentially, marking the letter 'Personal,' for of course it would never do to let anybody else see that letter, or I'd be in throuble up to me eyebrows for plotting agin me superior officer. Divil an answer have I had to that letther."

"They forget, Pat—and those that do not forget are afraid."

"He has not forgotten—an' he is afraid of nothing, me son. He must be in France. But we'll hear from him in due time, if he's livin'—an' if he was dead I'd have read it in the Army and Navy Journal. Shtill an' all, if we don't get action in forty-eight hours, we'll never get back to the ould outfit."

"If we only get to France I'll be satisfied, Pat. I enlisted to do some fighting. If I'd wanted a job busting horses I could have had a better paid one than this in civil life."

"Something will turn up," Rogan assured him. "I haven't been twinty years in this man's army to be licked in a hurry." He reached out and scratched my nose. "Well, the division commander has gone on ahead of his division, so you're safe for a bit, Professor, an' so is me little Jeff dog. But you're a privately owned horse an' owned be a private, so if you're to ate government fodder 'twould be well for us to go to our C.O. an' tell him about you. An honest confession is good for the sowl."

He was spared the trouble, however, for at that moment the commanding officer of the Remount station looked out of his office window and saw me. Out he

popped and commenced circling around me like a young rooster around an opponent. Then he looked at my teeth and rubbed my forelegs thoughtfully, to see if my bone was round, as in the case of a cold-blooded horse, or flat, as in the case of a thoroughbred.

"Good gracious," he murmured, "this is a horse and a half. Is he broken, Rogan?"

"Perfectly, sir. Walk, running walk, a trot so soft ye need hardly post whin riding him, a little cat-hop of a canter and a gallop that can cover a mile whilst ye'd be wondherin' what'd gone by ye, sir. As sweet a disposition as a saint, not flighty and as full of fun as a circus clown. A bit of a high school horse, sir."

"How interesting! I haven't seen him in the corrals heretofore."

"He's just arrived, sir. He's the property av Private Givens, sir, an' Givens had a notion the major might wink at maintainin' him here, sir, on account of the use he'd be to the bhoys that have to ride the rough ones, sir. The Professor is a champeen hazin' horse, bar none, an' what we need here is just that kind of a horse."

(At this juncture O'Malley interrupted to ask me what a hazing horse might be.

("A hazing horse, O'Malley," I explained, "is a sort of equine policeman. When a wild horse is being saddled for the first time the hazing horse walks up to him very close and the men, hauling on the halter-shank, swing the wild horse's head and draw it across the hazing horse's neck. Then the hazing horse's rider leans forward, grasps the wild horse by the ears and

holds him, while the saddle is adjusted. After the rough rider mounts, and the wild horse is cast loose to do his stuff, you get an exhibition of bucking, pitching and sunfishing for anywhere from thirty to sixty seconds. If the wild horse does not succeed in policing his rider in that period, he starts to run, pitching at the same time.

("Now, of course, the rider cannot stick on forever, and if he stays too long he will become exhausted and be thrown. Besides, the wild horse, blind with rage and half crazy with excitement, may run into a fence with him and both horse and rider may be injured. So at this juncture the hazing horses and their riders take after the runaway, dart in alongside of him, and herd him to a walk; or else one rider will lean down, grasp the runaway's head and jerk it up across the hazing horse's neck and stop him. The hazing horse on the other side will then press the runaway over against the first hazing horse, whereupon the rough rider scrambles off and over onto one or other of the hazing horses—riding double, you know. This is done to avoid being kicked when dismounting in the usual way."

("And you were a good hazing horse, eh?"

("I had a trick of running my head under the runaway's neck and lifting him. I could stop him like he'd been shot."

(Taffy sniggered. He was thinking what a task it would be for me to stop a little runt like him by such methods. In his mind's eye he saw me bending so low to get under his little neck that I'd fall on my nose.

("Go on wit' yer story," O'Malley begged. "What did the major say?")

The major grinned and looked at Ern Givens. "Your horse is making army life plain hell for you, isn't he, Givens? Well, as Rogan says, we can use your horse here very nicely. It's wholly illegal, but I dare say he'll be worth his board and lodging."

"The major might care to ride him occasionally," Ern Givens suggested artfully.

"The major might. Thank you, Private Givens. Well, stable him privately, son. It won't do to let him run in the corrals with these broom-tails. They might injure him. And, by the way, you two, you were both non-coms before you were transferred to me, and you should both have been made non-coms again here if I had any vacancies. I've been watching for a legitimate opportunity to bust some lesser men and give you their chevrons, but a letter I received today from Washington has altered my plans." He looked both men over humorously. "Which one of you two privates has a pull long enough to reach clear into the office of the adjutant-general of the army?"

"God knows I hate to brag, sir," said Rogan, "but there was a shave-tail once that could tell a good man whin he saw him."

The major looked at Rogan's ribbons. "Hum—That was a long time ago. Old soldier, old rascal! Well, an assistant adjutant-general writes me a personal letter, asking me to send you two to France with the next shipment of animals. He says he'll be there by that time and can be reached at G. H. Q. in a town

called Chaumont. As soon as you land you are to notify him by telegram where you are and what unit you are attached to, and he'll see that you are transferred to your old battery."

"Ya-hoo!" Ern Givens tore loose the yell he'd been wont to use on the range when he was feeling full of pep and he and I were giving a coyote a run.

"Hoo-roo! Glory be to Gawd!" roared Rogan.

"And that's why I'm not going to make you two non-coms," said the major. "What would be the use, since you're going to leave me?"

"Oh! So the major's going to let us go, then?"

"The major's going to send you to France with the first shipment of animals and if you don't come back, that'll not be my fault. I hate to lose you two men, but you have been badly treated and—well, I'd like to get to France myself and there didn't appear to be any prospect of getting there until today. Rogan, can you work your pull again?"

"Can a cat ate liver? Consider yerself in France, sir."

"Thank you, Rogan. After all," the major added as he went smiling back into his office, "I haven't raised any objection to your dog. And I'll breathe easier when you two are gone. You make me break the law. Right now I could be court-martialed."

"Thank the major," the two buddies called after him. And then Rogan leaped into the air, tore loose another wild Irish yell and came down with his fists up, in an attitude of attack. "Ya-hoo," yelled Ern Givens, and landed a smart slap on Rogan's blue-black jowl. Rogan countered with an equally smart poke in Ern's

ribs, and then they fell into each other's arms and danced around together and banged each other's backs and cursed scandalously. I tell you, my friends, they were two happy men. But I was not happy. I was wondering what was going to become of me, which was disloyal, of course. I should have known my beloved master would not forget me.

"What'll we do with the Professor and Jeff when we start for France, Pat?" Ern asked when, presently, they had settled down to normalcy.

"Do?" that blessed Rogan roared. "Do? Why, take thim wit' us, av coorse. What else would we do? I've hearrd there's grand partridge-shootin' in France, an' I've a mind to enjoy a shoot or two bechune battles. At any rate, I'll bring my shotgun. An' sure, what could be finer than reportin' back to the ould battery wit' the Professor for our dear Sammy to ride again at the head of his command?"

"That's Jake with me, Rogan. However, talk is cheap but it takes money to buy whisky. You can smuggle Jeff aboard a train or transport, but the Professor can't be carried in a blue denim barrack bag."

"Lave it to me, ye gossoon. I'm as full av tricks as a dog is of fleas. D'ye think I've been sogerin' twinty years to be as dumb now as the day I firrst held up me hand?"

"How will you work it, Pat? The job is up to you, understand. I'm just a recruit."

"How do I know how I'll wurrk it? We'll cross that bridge whin we come to it. All I ask ye is not to worry. Love'll find a way."

Dear old Rogan! Within the week he found a way.

A train-load of horses had come in from California, and Ern Givens and about forty other ex-cowboys in uniform saddled up and went down to the spur-track to drive them up to the Remount corrals. I observed that all the men were using stock saddles, so I inferred that while you can put a cowboy into a uniform you can't get him to break horses under a McClellan saddle.

Ern was riding me of course. We stood by the side of the chute watching the rookies come out of the stock cars and run down into the corral, when suddenly a horse came to the car door, paused, looked around at the outside world and then walked leisurely down the chute.

"Be the Great Gun av Athlone," Rogan yelled, "if here ain't the Professor's brother!"

There was no doubt about it! I couldn't be deceived. The new arrival was a brother or a half-brother of mine, and I would have bet a sack of black oats on it. He was my double. I could have allowed for such a thing as coincidence in size, weight and color-scheme, but not in bearing and temperament. He came down that chute as my father would have come, head up, eyes mildly curious, ears erect, nostrils gently extended, tail arched. An aristocrat, every inch of him.

(Here that dirty little Taffy interrupted my story.

("You hate yourself, don't you, Prof?"

("I know what I am, Taffy. I have self-esteem but not self-conceit."

(O'Malley reached over and gave Taffy a severe bite on the neck. "Let me hear another peep out av ye,

ye little Welsh scrub, and I'll kick ye to smithereens," he roared. "Ye base-born pigmy. Sure, if ye had a spoonful of thoroughbred blood in ye, 'tis life size ye'd be. Crack on, Professor." I resumed.)

Ern Givens stood up in his stirrups and gazed at that horse. "By Judas priest, Pat," he yelled, "there's truth in what you say. I know the breed—and this lot of horses comes from California. What's his brand?"

"A triangle," Rogan shouted.

"From the Triangle Ranch in Modoc County, California, Rogan. Ranceford Dane owns Sir Nigel, the palomino thoroughbred that sired the Professor. That horse is three-quarters thoroughbred and a quarter Percheron, and the family all have the same coloring. Rance Dane must be dead, otherwise none of that get would have been sold to the army."

Rogan and Ern rode into the corral and looked the stranger over. "Whin he's thrimmed an' groomed an' shod the divil himself couldn't tell him from the Professor," Rogan decided. "Very well, Ernie, my lad. Whin the shipment for Europe is made up we'll have this lad included in the lot, an' at the last minute we'll turrn him back in the corral an' substitute your horse. Or we may take thim both an' if the office that checks them on an' off the thransport axes questions we'll say we got the twins mixed. We must be careful. Remember, a governmint horse carries his brand on his hoof."

"The Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want," said Ern piously.

I walked up to the recent arrival and nosed him. "Hello, brother," I saluted him. "What's your breeding?"

"Sir Nigel out of a half-Percheron named Rosemary. Are you one of us?"

"I am your half-brother," I informed him. "I'm coming six years old."

"I'm five."

"You were born the year after my mother and I wandered off the Triangle range. Are you broken?"

"I should tell a man!"

"What's your name?"

"Booby," he answered. "They called me that because I didn't seem to have as much common sense as others of our family. I was harder to break. However, I've settled down," he added humorously. "What sort of proposition am I up against here?"

"You're in the army now, and it's the life of Riley if you keep your nose clean. You'll be the commanding officer's mount, if I've learned anything since I've been in the service, and you'll have a box stall and a striker to look after you. Welcome to the outfit, and see that you don't disgrace the family."

I introduced him to Dandy (Rogan was riding Dandy) and presently when the new arrivals had been detrained we herded them up to the Remount corrals and turned the grateful lot into corrals where there was plenty of good clean water and hay and fine soft silt to roll in. And how those rookies did roll and groan with pleasure after their long train ride! A great many of them, including Booby, were car-sick, and the rolling did them a world of good.

After Booby had rolled three times he got up and shook himself, took a drink at the trough, went over in a corner and lay down. He was too ill and tired to get up when Rogan strolled over to him, looked at his teeth and eyes and took his temperature.

"We'll take no chances on you, me lad," the ex-stable sergeant decided. "Up wit' you, me jewel, and it's into a box shtall we'll put ye, wit' six inches of shtraw to rest in, avic."

So Rogan led him away and when I saw him again a week later he had been clipped and shod. But I noticed that his mane and foretop had not been roached; like mine it had been carefully combed out and washed, likewise his tail, which, like mine, had been plucked and trimmed neatly at the root. He was feeling quite fit again, so Ern Givens saddled him and rode him around the breaking-corral a few minutes, then set up a three-foot hurdle and put him over it. I saw that Booby could jump quite as well as any of the family and I was immensely proud of him.

"He'll do. He's a cow-horse," Ern decided, and rode him over to the commanding officer's quarters. When he returned, afoot, Rogan said:

"Well, what did the major say?"

"He said, 'Thank you, Private Givens, for the duplicate.' "

I was right. Booby was too fine a horse to be issued to a cavalry troop or a battery, and the major was going to keep him for his private mount. And I was very proud of that, for naturally one likes to see the members of his own family do well in this world.

A month passed, and then one day the major came

over, and for a week all hands were busy cutting out horses and mules, giving them a strict physical examination and putting the ones that passed it in a corral by themselves. Ern and I were pretty busy from reveille till retreat.

One day who should I bump into in the mule corral but old Tip?

"Well, buddy," he said, "we're off at last. They've passed me for arduous overseas service. My luck holds."

We rubbed noses and had a little chin-chin over old times in the battery. Tip had been over with the mules three days, getting along the best he could, which wasn't half bad in view of the fact that Rogan had visited him daily and groomed him, which attention had earned him derisive brays from the rookies an unkind fate was forcing him to associate with. But he was in high spirits and his faith in being assigned to overseas duty had never faltered. He knew Rogan was on the job.

"I'm sorry for you, Prof," he said as we parted. "You, being a civilian, will miss all the fun."

"Don't be too sure of that, Tip, my boy," I assured him. "Rogan swears he'll get me across."

Tip eyed me seriously. "In that event, Prof, I withdraw my condolence. If Rogan says you'll go, go you will—and what's more, you and I will be on the same transport. I notice that he and Ern Givens are buddies now. A common misfortune has made them such. And, of course, since Ern Givens will not be separated from you and Rogan will not be separated from me, and those two will not be separated from each

other, the prospect for us looks extremely elegatash. By the way, do you know why we were separated from the battery?"

I did not and said so.

"The three-inch guns we trained on are obsolete, and we're leaving them behind! In France we're going to have the French 75's, and I hear they're wonderful ordnance. Horses and mules will be furnished from the Remount depots over there, and if our luck holds we may be assigned back to the old outfit. I doubt it, however. However, I'm satisfied to get back into the artillery again, no matter what regiment they send me to. I'll have to stick around for orders, of course, but you, you lucky dog, are a civilian, so all you have to do is to go over the hill, once you get to France. You'll not have any government brand, so they can't hold you when Sam Burwell comes along to claim you. The big job is to get you there."

"My brother is here," I confided. "You couldn't tell him from me. He's in the service—hoof brand and all—and Rogan's going to work up some scheme to make me double for him."

Tip whistled. "If that Mick ever goes to hell he'll wheedle Satan out of a furlough, Prof. Well, I suppose we'll meet on the train. Adiós, amigo."

CHAPTER XVIII

FOR three days I had been unable to continue my story. That old touch of gas wouldn't permit of interminable yarning with Charles O'Malley and Taffy, and when the Commanding Officer, the Skipper and the Top got back from the Tia Juana races, the Top noticed I was wheezing slightly. So he kept me in my box stall and gargled my throat with some hellish stuff that somehow did me a lot of good. On the fourth day I stood my morning exercise as well as I ever had, so once more I was turned loose with my friends.

O'Malley bade me a curt good morning and led the way to our old rendezvous in the brook under the weeping willow tree.

"Enrico's gone," he informed me, with a malicious grin. "When the Top got back, he took one look at the box stalls and another at the manure pile and made up his mind none of us had been stabled during his absence. So Enrico got the gate."

"And a boot in the tail from the Top's cork toe," Taffy chuckled. "Anybody who can fool the Top has to know something."

"The Top learned his stuff in a hard school, my son," I told the little Welshman. "This morning I heard him ask the Skipper to write to the commandant of the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill and request

the commandant to keep his eye open for some good old stable sergeant who is about to retire. A retired stable sergeant is the loneliest man on earth unless he can get a job working with horses in civil life. Our Top wants an assistant he can trust and one who knows his business. So—"

"When yer voice failed ye, Prof," O'Malley interrupted, "you and Tip were about to be sint to France. Glory be, I haven't slept for five consecutive minutes this last three days, I'm that intherested in the shtory of yer army career. Carry on, ye gossoon, or ye'll be the death of me."

"Tip had just passed the veterinary and you were to double for your half-brother," Taffy reminded me. "What happened after that?"

Well (I took up my story again), when the horses and mules selected for overseas service had all been congregated in certain corrals, all the stock trains in the world commenced pulling in on the siding near the Remount station. I can smell them yet! They had evidently come down from Kansas City and had recently carried steers, sheep and hogs. A detail went over and cleaned them out with spades, hoes and brooms, then washed them out and sprayed them all over with disinfectant. Then the horses and mules were led in one by one.

About thirty animals were allowed to each car, which made a snug fit all around and enabled all the animals to stand up comfortably without danger of being thrown down when the car jerked or swayed around a curve. Also, the animals were packed in so

snugly that none of them could lie down, even if the spirit moved them, which it didn't, for all of them knew instinctively that to lie down might have fatal consequences.

Before loading the animals were given a big feed and all the water they could drink, and when the last car was loaded the train pulled out promptly. I saw Tip going aboard with some of his brethren. Nobody had to lead that old warrior up the ramp, or prod him on the rump to get him inside the car, for Tip was an experienced traveler. Indeed, in his day, he had traveled on flat cars! I saw Rogan rubbing old Tip's mealy nose just before they parted; then Rogan gave Tip a slap on the rump and yelled: "Good-by, Tip. Take good care of yourself, boy, and preserve order among these rookies. I'll see you again in Mobile."

"You bet!" Tip brayed, and kicked up his old heels for very joy. "Surest thing you know, amigo." Then he nodded to me, ran up the ramp and took position at the extreme end of the car. Trust old Tip to find the best and safest spot for comfortable traveling! He liked a good firm wall on one side of him and a good big mule on the other, for, as I believe I told you earlier in my story, Tip was not big himself—just a bunchy little pack-mule. What he lacked in size, however, he made up in courage and toughness. He could give away a lot of weight to draft mules and make them look silly on any kind of job.

The sixth train to pull out for Mobile was loaded with horses, and the commandant had arranged to send Rogan with that train. He had made Rogan a lance corporal and placed him in charge, with permis-

sion to select his own men for the detail. So, of course, Ern Givens was the first man selected. The men all had their kits down at the loading corrals, ready to move out as soon as the train should be loaded.

Well, when they had thirty horses in the last car, Rogan gave a nod to one of his men, who walked up to the lieutenant in charge of the loading and asked him to look at one of the horses picked for shipment, but which appeared to be slightly unwell. So the looie walked away, and no sooner was his back turned than my half-brother, who had been loaded last, was led down into the corral again by Rogan. Off came my saddle and bridle; while Rogan slipped the bridle on my half-brother, Ern Givens cinched the saddle on him, and I saw very clearly what was expected of me. There was no time for fooling. I had to substitute for my half-brother before the lieutenant returned, so I just ran up the ramp and took my place at the end of the car as I had seen Tip do. They had the car locked before the lieutenant came back.

Ern Givens walked up to the officer, leading my half-brother, and saluted. "Will the lieutenant be good enough to ride my horse back to the Remount station and turn him over to the commanding officer with my compliments?" he inquired.

"Certainly, Private Givens," said the officer, and forked my half-brother without a moment's hesitation. He had seen Ern riding his own horse for days, and it never occurred to him to look at my half-brother's hoof brand and discover that I had been substituted for him in the car! He merely said good-by to Rogan and his detail, cautioned them to behave themselves,

gave them their transportation, travel orders and expense money and rode away. Rogan promptly hustled his detail into the caboose at the end of the train, and signaled the engineer. As the train started Rogan swung up onto the caboose steps, and we were headed for France.

Half-way to Mobile the train was stopped and unloaded. We were all put into corrals, where we rolled and ate and drank our fill, for we were both hungry and thirsty, not having had either food or water thus far en route. Rogan inspected every horse as he came down the ramp. A few had received minor scratches and abrasions, but all in all the shipment was in fine shape. Ern caught me as I came down, led me to water and then to the fence, where he tied me and hung a nose-bag on me. It was heavy with moist bran and crushed black oats.

Many a time in the days that followed, when I had been as much as three days without food, did I think of that delicious repast. Ern was pretty wolfish himself at the time, as I heard him remark to Rogan. They had managed to get hot coffee at intervals, but their food had been government straight—hardtack, goldfish, canned beans and monkey meat. Ern said he wanted a whole apple pie and a beefsteak as big as a blacksmith's apron, with French fried potatoes on the side; but like a true horseman he thought first of his horse. While I munched my fodder he got a curry-comb and brush out of his haversack and groomed me thoroughly, Rogan, meanwhile, having gone off to the telegraph station for any possible orders that might be sent him en route.

He returned with a placid countenance. "I've got a wire from the major, Ernie," he announced. "His orders arrived just after we left an' he's ordered overseas. He thanked me for working me pull in his behalf an' stated that for our kindness in lavin' him the Professor's brother an' takin' a civilian horse on a government train he do be under additional obligation, since he can now ship Booby on the next thrain an' have him for his own use in France, an' no questions asked. He wished us luck wit' the Professor an' says he hopes to arrive in Mobile in time to help us in our illicit entherprise."

Ern grinned all over. "One of the best hombres in uniform, that major," he declared. "He's a human being."

They waited until I had finished my mash, then Ern turned me loose to nibble hay out of a rack, while he and Rogan and the detail went off to find a restaurant. The empty train pulled in on a siding and we rested in that town forty-eight hours. When we got aboard again we were all feeling as fit as fiddles.

Two days later we pulled into Mobile and detrained. The corral we were herded into was next a mule corral, and almost the first mule I sighted was old Tip. I neighed at him and he trotted up and nosed me over the fence.

"Well, kid," he queried, "how about you?"

I informed him I was quite fit and added that I had had journeys on trains before.

Tip had kept his long ears cocked and was, as usual, filled with the latest military news, for he had been in Mobile three days ahead of us.

"We sail on the transport Ishtar—that is, we mules do," he announced. "Horses are to follow on another boat. Nobody knows to what French port we are bound; but who the hell cares, so long as we get there and find something doing?"

I was disappointed. I had hoped to make the voyage across the sea in company with Tip, for with the exception of Dandy I had made no other close friends in the service. I voiced my sense of regret that Tip and I should be parted.

"I wouldn't bank too heavily on that yet, Prof," the old scoundrel assured me. "Rogan is a powerful person and he has a special interest in me, for some reason or other. I never knew a soldier to have as much affection for a mule as Rogan has for me. I suppose it's just for old sake's sake. Here he comes now."

"Hey, Tip, ye ould walloper," Rogan shouted, and came over and rubbed Tip's nose. "So they're goin' to ship the mules on the Ishtar, are they? Well, faith thin, there's one mule they'll lave behind to follow on a horse transport."

He climbed over the fence, looked cautiously around to see that he was not observed, and then plucked a hair from Tip's tail. Next he got out a small bottle of alcohol and washed the hair in it (I learned subsequently that this was to disinfect it), then threaded the hair through the head of a long slim needle, picked up Tip's off front foot and ran the needle under the hide of the fetlock from left to right and drew the hair through. Then, with a small pair of scissors he snipped the hair off on each side and set Tip's foot down.

"That'll make ye as lame as a dog be mornin', Tip, me jewel," he announced, "an' no lame mule will go aboard the Ishtar. Whin she's gone I'll pull that hair out an' in an hour ye'll be as well as ever ye were—seein' which I'll mintion the fact to the commandin' officer an' take ye aboard the horse thransport, where I can keep an eye on ye, ye ould divil, for I've a great notion to see ye do yer full thirty years av service an' be retired wit' the honor ye deserve."

He walked away about his business. Tip rolled a comical eye at me, and I burst out laughing, as who would not?

"Can you beat that hombre?" Tip demanded.

I decided it couldn't be done.

CHAPTER XIX

SURE enough Tip was dog-lame in the morning. His fetlock was very painful and feverish and a trifle swelled. Presently men entered the corral, tethered the mules together and led them off to the dock, and of course it was Rogan who discovered Tip's condition and promptly reported it to the veterinary in charge.

Now, I want to tell you something about veterinaries. When the automobile came in veterinaries started going out. The country just couldn't use as many as it did formerly, so when the war broke out any veterinary that had a sheepskin from a veterinary hospital was given a commission. In fact, a lot of ex-livery-stable men were commissioned as veterinaries and, I dare say, some good capable army farriers. Rogan used to say that a real veterinary was as scarce as hair on a lizard, and that the average veterinary contented himself with giving a sick horse a dose of salts, complete rest and a lot of poulticing.

I imagine Rogan was more than half right, for the veterinary he brought over to see Tip was much mystified. He finally decided that Tip had strained a tendon and marked him off the passenger list. The wise Rogan argued with him, declaring Tip would be all right in a day or two, that it was nothing serious; but of course that was merely Rogan's strategy, and

it worked. The veterinary gave him a cold look and asked him what the devil *he* knew about the diseases of the horse. Then he accused Rogan of impudence and bade him mind his own business, after which, to prove what a smart veterinary *he* was, he walked away without investigating Tip's fetlock as closely as he should have. Rogan chuckled. Then he whistled "Caisson's Rolling Along," which was infallible evidence that he was entirely satisfied with the way things were going.

Well, the Ishtar loaded and pulled away from the dock that night, and the next morning the soldiers started getting the horses down to the same dock to load on a ship called the Tecumseh. As each horse was led up to the gang-plank the soldier leading him would stop, lift up his foot and read his brand aloud, and a clerk at the loading officer's desk beside the gang-plank would repeat it aloud—whereupon the loading officer would check that brand off on the passenger list.

("I hadn't any idea they'd be so particular about a mere horse," O'Malley interrupted.)

A mere horse costs money, and when he's shipped there must be a record of the shipment (I reminded O'Malley). A horse is government property, and the officer in whose charge he is, is responsible for him. If he loses him he must pay the government the value of the horse, else the government will deduct it from his pay. Our major was in Mobile by now and still in charge of that animal shipment; consequently he would be responsible for every head of stock until he should receive a receipt from the loading officer.

After that, of course, his responsibility would cease and become the responsibility of the commanding officer of that horse transport.

The major was standing at the loading officer's desk when Ern Givens led me out of line and approached the gang-plank. Solemnly he lifted up my foot, rubbed some imaginary dirt off it and called out the brand that was on the hoof of my half-brother, left behind in the Remount station in Oklahoma. The clerk repeated it. "Check," said the loading officer, and Ern Givens ran up the gang-plank with me, along the deck and down a cleated ramp to the deck below.

Here we found Rogan, who directed Ern to place me in a stall close to the end of the ramp. It wasn't really a stall, but a sort of framework made of two by four pine scantling bolted together and very strong. There was just room enough for me to stand in it comfortably. In front of me was a galvanized-iron manger, with one corner divided into a compartment for water. A cross-section of planed scantling met my breast, and when I was well into my place Rogan and Ern bolted another cross-section of scantling in place across my quarters. I was perfectly comfortable, but I could move neither from side to side nor backward and forward. In front of me there was a little alleyway and across that I could see a long line of horses' heads facing me. The alley was filled with sacked grain, and from somewhere in the distance I could smell alfalfa hay.

"What did the major say?" Rogan inquired.

"Nothing, Pat."

"God bless him for that. I pulled the hair out of

Tip's fetlock last night an' he was no longer lame this mornin', so I had the major up to look at him. Then the major had the veterinary up, an' the result is Tip's been ordhered shipped with this lot of horses. Do you now, Ernie, like the good man, go out on the dock an' get Tip aboard, whilst I shtay here an' see to it that nobody puts a horse in Tip's shtall?"

In about ten minutes old Tip came mincing down the ramp behind Ern and was billeted next to me.

"Well, well, well," he brayed. "So here we all are together again, and may the good Lord preserve us from seasickness. I've traveled far on transports, but I can't say that I ever got accustomed to it. If a soldier had any preferences I'd tell the cock-eyed world I prefer more fresh air and sunlight. I understand we'll be cooped up here about twelve or thirteen days. . . . Well, we can stand that all right."

"How can we, Tip?" I demanded. "We're wedged in here as tight as sardines in a can. How are we ever going to lie down to sleep?"

"That's the Big Idea, Prof. We don't lie down. See that you don't try it either, because once you get down on a transport you never get up. If we should strike a bit of dirty weather you'll thank your lucky stars you're braced fore and aft and sideways, so you can keep your feet. If you slip when the ship's pitching you'll be out of luck. Nine times out of ten the horse or mule that slips breaks his neck over that scantling across his breast, or else he breaks a leg. If you break a leg, my son, Rogan will come and put a pistol in your ear, and then you'll be dragged out and up that ramp and tossed overboard to feed the fishes. And I

don't know of any more inglorious finish for a battery commander's mount."

"But I've never slept standing up," I protested. "I doubt if I can do it—at least, not for twelve days and twelve nights."

Out of the accumulated wisdom of his adventurous past Tip assured me that I didn't know what I could do until I had to do it. "I never knew I could swim until a soldier passed my halter-shank to another soldier sitting in a boat; then two more soldiers shoved me off the ship and, by the corn of Missouri, I had to swim or drown! So I swam.

"I knew an old pack-mule when I first joined the service. He had been with Lawton in an Apache campaign, and told me that Lawton used to catch renegade Indians by marching his troops until they couldn't march another step, and then make them get up and march twenty miles more. That's soldiering, my son. It's the fighting spirit—the something that carries you forward long after you're done in. Don't worry. You'll stand on your feet twelve days or fifty, and you'll sleep, and you'll mind your step and not start shrieking or jumping when the ship pitches a little. Trust in old Pat Rogan and your master, Prof. They'll never leave us. They'll make their beds down on the hay in this hold and be ready, any hour of the day or night, to give help to a horse that needs it."

"Well," I agreed, "this is old stuff to you. You ought to know."

"I bet I ought," said Tip bitterly. "I went to Manila once in the sailing ship Siam with three hundred other mules. We weren't loaded right. It was the first time

the government had shipped animals in a sailing ship, I think. Well, we struck a succession of gales, and the way dead mules were hauled up through the hatch and hove overboard would have broken your tender heart, m'lad. I went down at the first real pitch, but fortunately I didn't break any bones and I had sense enough to stay down until the weather moderated.

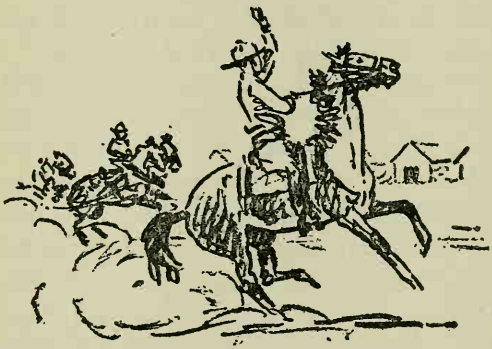
"Only three of us survived that trip, and what a sorry sight we were! Skin and bone, half our hide gone, ill with pink-eye and shipping fever. They hoisted us overboard in crates to a casco and then onto the dock at Binondo. When I felt Mother Earth under my hoofs again I bucked and pranced like a lunatic. Lord, how I cut up! Everybody was laughing at me.

"One of my comrades got down to roll and never got up. He was too weak. And the other walked a few blocks and died—of happiness, probably. But I managed to hoof it to the stables of the Sixth Field Artillery before I flopped—and providentially Rogan was there. We'd met in Cuba and he remembered my brand, so he took charge of me. He let me stay right where I was. . . . By the way, you'd never guess what was the first medicine he gave me."

"What?"

"A quart of good whisky. It warmed me up and put some pep into me; then it made me tight and I rolled over on my side and fell asleep. When I awoke I felt better, and Rogan fed me hot oatmeal gruel in a long-necked bottle, and chopped feed with some molasses in it, and some oil-cake meal and some good hand-picked alfalfa hay; and pretty soon I began to pick myself together. I was up in a week and in

sixty days I was off sick report and Rogan, because of his devotion to me, was made a corporal. The shipper said he'd saved the government a mule worth all of sixteen hundred dollars. Yes, that's what they used to figure a mule or a cavalry mount worth by the time they'd gotten him to the Philippines. And," Tip added thoughtfully, "from all I can hear about this new war, she's a big brute and no mistake, and I'll probably be worth two thousand dollars when they get me there."



CHAPTER XX

NO matter how blue the prospect, it was simply impossible for me to feel down-hearted around old Tip. He was a philosopher, he had learned discipline and he had esprit de corps. To him the job was all that counted; to flunk the job, to quit when one had no reasonable excuse for quitting was to Tip the most despicable of crimes. O'Malley, there's something about the service that does things to you. It makes you forget yourself. You quit thinking about how important you are and concentrate on the importance of the job. It's a sort of religion, I think, and civilians will never understand it.

So many civilians look down on the regular army and call them peace bums, and say army officers can't have very much ambition or they wouldn't be working for the sort of salaries the government pays them. What these damnable critics don't know is that it's the job and not the wages that count. Somebody has to do the thankless task, somebody has to hold the torch of duty and patriotism high, or it would go out and the country be left struggling in darkness. But the country doesn't know that until a war comes, and then it pays for its education for the next fifty or hundred years—and forgets again. Tip had a great contempt for civilians, and at first I used to think he was prejudiced, but I have learned since that he had ample grounds for his contempt.

However, to get back to my story. About dark they finished leading horses aboard, and the electric lights were turned on in our quarters. The Remount men en route to France assisted the soldiers of the quartermaster's department to feed and water us. There was a detail on duty continuously, and our quarters were kept spick and span.

The major came down after dinner and found Rogan and Ern Givens sitting on a bale of hay. They jumped to attention and he grinned.

"I just dropped around to see if you two scoundrels are being well cared for," he announced.

"The enlisted men's mess isn't half bad, sir," Rogan replied. "An' as for our shleepin' quarthers, I've slept in the mud an' wather too often to turrn up me nose at a pile av loose hay."

The major laughed and went prowling away, looking at the horses.

Sometime that night we pulled away from the dock, and by morning there was a gentle motion to the ship. We soon accustomed ourselves to it, however, and at Tip's suggestion I braced myself with my front feet and leaned back heavily on the stanchion across my quarters; and in this position I awoke after a long and refreshing sleep, and found Tip grinning at me.

"Why, I've been asleep," I declared.

"A horse, like a mule, gets used to many things," he replied.

That was a tiresome trip. My muscles ached from being in such cramped quarters, and after I had stood on my feet forty-eight hours I felt that nothing would give me more pleasure than to kick the back out of a

barn. I stamped a great deal to take the kinks out of my muscles.

Presently the ship settled down to business. The heaving and pitching ceased, and Tip said the sea was, undoubtedly, as smooth as a pond. Ern Givens had been very seasick—so sick, in fact, that he was unable to attend to me, and Rogan, who had crossed the Pacific half a dozen times, spoofed my poor master unmercifully, although I observed that he did all in his power to make Ern comfortable. Poor Ern's squawking and sighing and moaning filled the air. As soon as the ship ceased to heave, however, Ern ceased heaving, too, and presently he came and rested his face against my nose and remarked to Rogan that he wouldn't be surprised if he lasted till spring after all. An hour later he had a bright idea. He unbolted the stanchion across my quarters, backed me out of my stall and walked me up and down the alleyway for two hours. When he put me back in my stall I felt great; all the ache was gone from my legs. Then Rogan took a pasear with Tip. Of course this was strictly against orders, so we never took our exercise until it was possible to do so without interference from some non-com officer. Rogan had been a sergeant so long that he knew how to carry his authority, but while a private on that transport he suffered cruelly under the niggling interference and rawhiding of the military Johnnies-come-lately who knew little and were busy trying to conceal the fact by shooting off their mouths.

Ern, too, suffered, for his had been a free life, and the restrictions and inhibitions of army life irked

him no little. It is terrible for a man blessed with good, sound, hard common sense to have to remain a private. However, as Rogan often remarked in my presence, sooner or later such men come to the top, like cream, and are skimmed off and made into something better.

Throughout the voyage Tip and I heard considerable talk among our handlers and managed to piece together some idea of our progress. It seems we were not sailing in convoy, like the troop ships that carried soldiers. It was a case of every horse transport for herself, and the devil take the hindmost. We were just freighters, and armed with a four-inch rifle aft and a couple of light guns upon the bridge, whatever the bridge may be, for I never saw one to my certain knowledge. In case of attack by a German submarine we were supposed to defend ourselves as best we could. We had navy gun crews aboard to handle the guns.

On the twelfth day I learned from the conversations going on around me that our ship had entered the submarine zone, and I gathered that a submarine is a ship that steams along under water and fires torpedoes under water; occasionally she comes up to shell a ship to stop her until she can get close enough to make sure of a hit with a torpedo.

There was considerable nervousness and excitement among the men, with the exception of Rogan and Ern Givens. Rogan didn't know what it meant to be nervous or excited about anything, although I heard him tell Ern that he had been badly frightened in the first half-dozen engagements he had participated in, but that eventually he had got over this fear. If

Ern was apprehensive he did not show it. He was that sort of man. Nor was he addicted to talking about himself and airing his emotions.

All day long, that day we entered the submarine zone, I could hear men saying to each other: "Well, Bill, what'd you do if a fine big fat torpedo should crash through the wall where you're sittin'?"

And Bill would titter and say: "Guess, I wouldn't have time to do any serious thinkin' on the subject, Joe." Then the other chap would titter too. This sort of foolish persiflage finally got on old Rogan's nerves, and he cursed the lot out roundly and told them they reminded him of a young ladies' seminary.

In the midst of his rawhiding a loud report echoed through the ship and I distinctly felt her tremble a little.

"Aha, me brave laddy-bucks," Rogan yelled delightedly, "get set for that torpedo. The four-inch gun aft is in action."

He ran up the ramp to the main deck with everybody following him, and Tip and I gathered from the wild bits of conversation that floated down to us that we were being pursued by a submarine which had fired a shell at us as a signal to stop. Our navy crew had promptly opened on her, and the captain was crowding on all the speed he had, while the wireless operator sent out calls for help. From a great distance Tip and I could hear the sound of the submarine's gun.

I was tremendously excited and broke out into a sweat. Tip, on the contrary, merely cocked his long ears and listened gravely. "If it's in the books that we're to get it, Prof," he assured me lightly, "why,

we'll get it. If it isn't in the books we'll not. Hah! We got it that time."

There was a tremendous explosion upon deck, accompanied by a tearing, rending sound.

"Corner of the bridge shot away and the skipper with it," somebody yelled. And then I heard Rogan's gruff voice, raised in the note of command—although he had no command.

"All you men down below! Quick, damn you, and no back talk."

There was some back talk from one of the Q.M. non-coms, and the next thing I knew that non-com and Rogan came rolling down the ramp, locked in each other's arms and striking each other at every roll. At the foot of the ramp Rogan got up and dusted himself, while the sergeant lay there.

"I'll take command here," Rogan growled. "You're not fit for it, ye ass. One of yer men's been hit—and still you'd let the others stand around gawkin' under accurate shell-fire."

He seized a short-handled manure shovel and ran back up the ramp; a few seconds later he returned herding the men before him.

"Now thin, curiosity kilt the cat," he cried, "but I'll not have it killin' ye, although God knows 'tis shmall loss that same would be. Ye've a shteel deck above ye. Be grateful for it. What d'ye think this is? A vaudeville show?"

There were more explosions on deck and more rending, crashing sounds. The submarine had the range, and the hits came with great frequency now. Rogan was lost in admiration of the German marks-

manship and desolated at the marksmanship of our navy gunners. Finally he could stand it no longer and went on deck to investigate.

"They're outranging our gun," he explained upon his return. "The deck's a ruin an' a shambles, an' two of the navy gun crew are down. Do ye come wit' me, Ernie, me lad, an' we'll give the gobs a hand. I've a notion I was long enough in the field artillery to know something av direct fire, an' this navy gun of ours is a simple thing to handle."

Ern Givens got up quickly from the bale of hay he was seated on and silently followed Rogan up on deck. Tip gazed pridefully after them.

"Nobody will ever have to send for those two, Prof," he declared. "Aren't they the flowers of the flock?"

I thought so.

CHAPTER XXI

AS nearly as I can recall, it was sunset when the submarine opened on us, and when darkness fell the firing died away on our ship. Presently Rogan and Ern came down the ramp, and in response to the eager questioning of the other men Rogan informed us that the four-inch gun was almost out of ammunition and was saving what was left until the sub should get to closer quarters.

The sub had a searchlight bent on us and was still hammering us with light shells, some of which had gone through the deck forward and raised the devil among the horses quartered there. About twenty of the crew of our ship had been killed, and the ship was now in charge of the second officer. There were several holes in our hull at the water-line, and the pumps were busy; all of the life-boats had been wrecked by shell-fire, and the outlook was very dubious. But although the electric plant was out of business the engines were still intact, and the ship was still going at full speed.

The wireless was dead, but just before it died two British destroyers fifty miles distant had wirelessed that they were coming. Rogan said that if we could last another hour we would be saved; that we appeared to be well down into the English Channel, and that he could see a smear of lights off to port. He guessed they must be houses on the coast of France.

About that time the submarine ceased firing. After five minutes of silence Rogan shook his head dolefully. "She's closing in on us now," he declared. "Going to take a chance in the darkness before those British destroyers can come up, pick her out with their searchlights and drive her off with depth charges."

The men stood around in the darkness talking in low tones. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion in the center of the ship. It seemed to lift her out of the water; she trembled and lay over at a sharp angle almost immediately, and Tip and I found ourselves without any volition on our part leaning heavily forward against the breast stanchion.

Loud shouts came from the deck—and the throb of the engines ceased. Faintly from the decks below I could hear the wild, frightened screaming of horses in mortal agony, and the men on duty in those quarters came running up the ramp. That is, some of them did. There were a number who died there.

"Well, that's the end av the shtory, lads," Rogan spoke quietly. And even as he spoke we got another torpedo. "All hands on deck," he commanded. "No need to die here, like rats in a trap."

I could hear the rush of feet as the frightened men scrambled up the ramp, and Tip and I were alone in the darkness, trembling.

"Steady, Prof, steady," old Tip's voice was as calm as ever. "Nothing should quite become a soldier's life so much as his manner of leaving it. We're due for our honorable discharge, so let's go down like disciplined veterans and not like a pair of untrained recruits."

Two men came running down the ramp again. They were Rogan and Ern Givens. Ern struck matches, and by their feeble light Rogan with an ax sheared away the rear stanchions that held us in our compartments. Then they came around in front, untoggled our chain halter-shanks, backed us carefully out and led us up the ramp to the deck. It was hard going, for the ship was heeled over to an alarming degree.

In the dim starlight on deck I could see men madly putting life-rafts over the side. There were not enough rafts for everybody, and in their demoralization sailors and soldiers fought like madmen for the shelter on the few that were intact. I heard shouts of command and frenzied cries—curses, sobs, a note of defiant laughter and a voice that said:

"Keep cool. Be sure you all have your life-preservers on. Don't get excited. Those destroyers aren't far off now. You'll all float around until you're picked up."

Ern passed the chain halter-shank up around my neck and looped it there. I noticed he was wearing a life-preserver, and I noticed, too, the glimmer of distant lights along the French shore.

"Ready, Pat?"

"Aye, lad. It can't be more than five miles to those lights and maybe there's a beach. We'll swim for it, Ernie." I saw him reach up and stroke old Tip's mealy nose. "Now, thin, Tip, me bhoy, show thim how we swum ashore at Daiquiri, in Cuba, nineteen years ago."

"By the corn of Missouri, we've got a fighting chance yet, Prof," Tip brayed softly. "While there's

life there's hope." I saw Rogan scramble up on Tip's sleek back.

"But I've never done any swimming, Tip," I told him.

"You'll do it now. Go first, or I'll kick you overboard," Tip commanded ferociously. "You first, and Pat and I will follow. For the honor of your thoroughbred ancestors, don't flunk it."

Ern Givens was up on my back now and I felt his hand along my neck, soothing and comforting me. Then his knees closed on me and I felt the touch of his heels; Rogan struck a bunch of matches and held them high over Tip's head, and I could see the ship's rail with the water beginning to come in through the scupper-holes. Still I hesitated, and Tip came behind me and with his breast shoved me violently forward.

"Show your thoroughbred blood," he brayed.

The taunt stung me and I ran forward three steps and cleared the rail, with Tip's cheer following me. I went down, but came up again promptly and as there was nothing to get my feet on, I commenced to struggle; instantly I discovered I could keep my head and withers out of the water by struggling and that the less effort I put into my struggles the easier it was. And I was moving off through the water!

I heard a splash behind me and a wild yell from Rogan; a moment later a black head came up beside me and old Tip blew a shower of salt water from his nostrils.

"Steady-y-y!" he commanded. "Route step! Don't make hard work of it, Prof. Just imagine you're trying to walk on water. Stretch your head far out, lad, and take long easy breaths. Got to get far enough

from this ship, so we'll not be sucked down in the vortex when she sinks."

I had sense enough to listen to reason and in about a minute I was surprised at the ease with which I kept up with Tip. "Poor Dandy," I said to him. "We'll never see him again."

"To hell with the last that dies. This is war, young fella m'lad."

"It'll be a long pull, Ernie," said Rogan. "Slide off an' grip the loop av the halter-shank. What wit' the life-preservers on, we'll float nicely an' our mounts will tow us along. See to it that the Professor doesn't get excited an' start swimmin' in circles. Slap him alongside the jaw to guide him—now, better shtill, hold him up a bit till I get in front wit' Tip. Then he'll follow."

"See that you do," Tip warned me and swept swiftly out in front. "Head for those distant lights. Take it easy. A slow stroke but a steady one. Lights at night deceive one so—and those lights may be many miles away. I've never swum more than a quarter of a mile, but by the corn of Missouri I'll do it tonight or die trying. I just can't go back on Rogan."

"And I can't go back on Ern Givens," I panted. "The only two men on that ship that forgot to think entirely of themselves. They wouldn't desert us, Tip."

"Their kind never go back on a bunkie, old son. Hello, there's something in front of us. Right oblique! Change direction by the left flank when we've rounded it."

Something long and gray and bulky rose out of the sea, dimly visible in the starlight, dead ahead. I could see a sort of tower well up toward the front of it, and

as we approached a door opened in this tower, letting out a flood of light. Then three men in overalls stepped out of the door and stood staring off toward the horse transport.

"There's the divils that done us in," Rogan growled back at Ern. "Bear off to the right and pass around her stern. I think she's hove to."

"Bear off yourself and be damned to you," Ern Givens retorted. "I heeled myself with my forty-five before we started—just couldn't let a good gun like that go down with the ship—and here's my chance to pay something on account."

He leaned forward, slapped me on the right side of the face and headed me straight for the submarine again. When we were within twenty feet of it I felt Ern's left arm go around my neck, felt him heave himself up out of the water. Then, right back of my ears a six-shooter commenced barking—and one after the other those three men on that submarine's deck fell forward on their faces and slid down the sloping deck into the water. A fourth man thrust his head out the turret, and Ern Givens put a bullet through that man's head . . . and just then my nose touched the side of the submarine, so I turned and swam along its length, cleared the stern and straightened away again for those lights in the distance.

Fearful of losing Tip and Rogan, I neighed, and Tip's friendly bray and Rogan's shouts answered me. I redoubled my stroke and caught up with them.

Ern slid off me, back into the water, his left arm crooked in the loop of the halter-shank, his fingers clasped in my mane while with his right he paddled, striving to help me along as best he could.

CHAPTER XXII

HOW far we swam that night I do not know. I only know how long we swam. According to Rogan's wrist-watch, which had only had one brief immersion in water and which kept right on ticking, we were in the water four hours. I thought we'd never get there, but Tip's faith never faltered.

"Those lights are getting closer," he kept on saying, over and over, "and it's a gorgeous night for a swim. Not enough sea to rock a canoe."

Rogan, too, seemed to think we were swimming under most fortunate conditions. "Lucky for us we give Tip an' the Professor a bit av exercise, comin' over," he shouted to Ern Givens, "otherwise they'd be muscle-bound now an' lucky for us, too, they're not shod! Glory be, I'm cowld. Have a care, Ernie, me son, would yer hand get so numb ye'll lose yer hold. Take a half-turrn av the halter-shank around yer wrist, or change hands."

"You run your own party, Pat. I'll manage mine. How are you making it, old-timer?"

"Well, I'm not as young as I used to be, but I'll do for another two hours. If I dhrop off go on wit'out me. There'd be no sinse strivin' to save me."

We plugged along. I was bitterly cold and my legs ached. Little waves kept slopping into my nostrils and I was snorting continuously to keep my pipes clear.

Also, in the excitement of the fight Rogan and Ern had forgotten to give Tip and me our evening drink and I was consumed with thirst. My legs moved automatically; I felt that each stroke would be my last. In my day I had known what it meant to be leg-weary—at least I thought I had—but the hardest day I had ever put in on the range was just a bit of light exercise compared with what I was undergoing now.

"How about you, bunkie?" Tip brayed from time to time.

I could think of no answer more appropriate than the one my beloved master had made to a similar query from Rogan. "You manage your own party and I'll manage mine, Tip," I whinnied back.

Tip wasn't the least bit annoyed. "There spoke your thoroughbred blood, my boy."

"Too bad you haven't some of it in your veins, Tip," I taunted him.

"Don't get dirty, Prof. I have. I'm descended, on my father's side, from a wild Algerian ass, and nobody ever ran one of those critters down with a mere horse. I'm little, but I'm tough—and oh, so dog-gone tired."

The lights crept closer and closer, and presently Rogan cried out that he could see the outlines of the shore. Then, suddenly, we heard the sound of breakers and before you could say Jack Robinson we were into them.

"Hang on," Rogan yelled. Then a big breaker picked me up on its crest and swept me in fifty feet with the speed of a troop train. As it passed from under me another wave came and swept clear over us.

"Hell's fire," I thought. "That one will do for my

buddy." But it didn't. When I got my head up again I heard old Tip's bray:

"Oh, kid, how about you?"

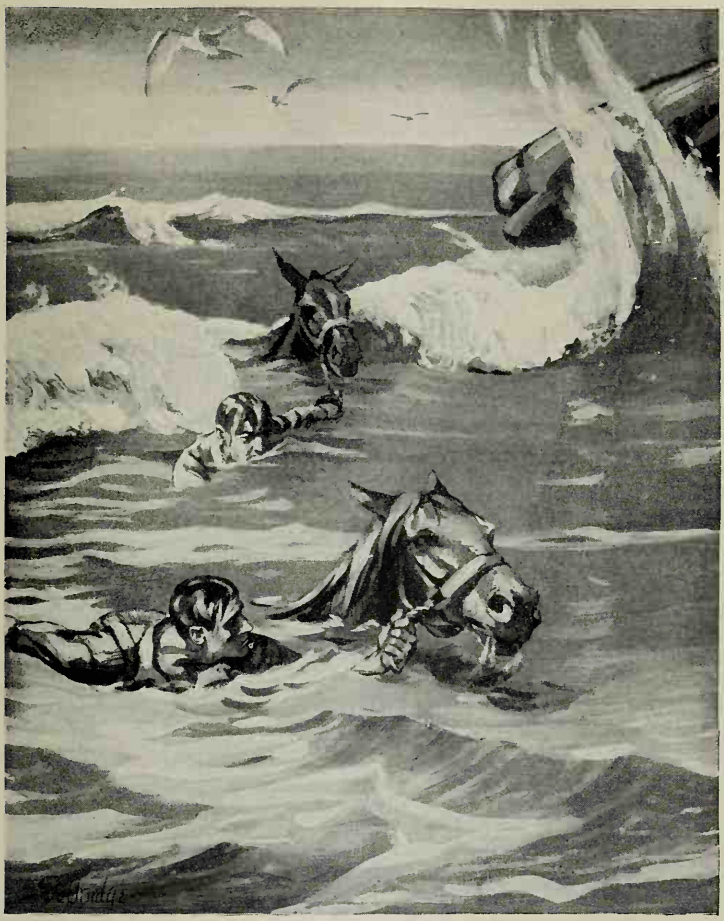
I didn't answer. I'd swallowed a barrel of salt water and couldn't. But I kept on swimming. Wave after wave picked us up, rode us for a brief space or permitted us to ride them.

"I'm drowning," Tip called to me faintly. "I'm all in. I can't make it. Good-by."

A wave swept me up alongside him just as he and Rogan went down. Then I felt a hand close on my tail and I knew I was towing something. That something was Rogan and Tip. Rogan had grasped my tail and was holding on like a bulldog with his right hand while his left clasped the chin strap of Tip's headstall. Tip was done, indeed. He couldn't get his head up. He was drowning. He got it clear once and let out a despairing sort of scream, then another wave rolled over us and blotted out his mournful protest.

Ern Givens's hand was beating me along the neck. "Good horse," he was shouting. "A little bit more, brother, a little bit more. Another fifty yards. Don't quit on me, little horse—"

I gathered all the strength I had and swam as I had not swum before. Rogan still held my tail and by the burden behind me I knew that Rogan still held Tip. I felt myself going. . . . I was half full of water. . . . My front hoofs touched bottom for a moment . . . I collapsed. . . . Another breaker rolled me over and over. . . . With a final effort I scrambled erect and found myself standing on all four feet, with good hard sand under me.



"I gathered all the strength I had and swam as I had never swum before."

Ern Givens let me go and I staggered ashore and fell in a heap where the last of the surf beat against the shore. Wearily I turned my head and gazed seaward. In the dim starlight I could see Ern Givens and Rogan, each with a grip on Tip's head-stall, half dragging, half towing the old warrior ashore.

Tip wasn't dead, but he was mighty close to it. He just had life enough left—consciousness enough left—to try to scramble along on his knees for a little way, then he, too, collapsed. He was too weak to hold up his head, and I assure you, O'Malley, he would have drowned in a foot of water if Ern and Rogan hadn't stood by him and held it up for him.

How did they do it? I don't know. Ern did most of it, for he was young and hard and tough, but I'll say this for old Rogan, half drowned as he was. He held up his end, and he managed to do this because he wasn't the quitting kind. He had the fighting spirit and that fighting spirit gave him something it had kept in stock for him long after he was done in. I knew then what Tip meant when he told me of that something that training and discipline gives to soldiers. It's the soul of the warrior!

They stood there for an hour, holding poor, weak, half-drowned old Tip's head up. "I won't let him die," I heard Rogan cry wearily. "By God, I'll not. He carried me through this night. Do you stick wit' us, Ernie, lad." As if Ern Givens needed urging.

So there they stood, in water up to their buttocks, sagging weakly against old Tip's jowls and against each other, cursing, whimpering a little with desperation, but—holding on. And as they fought for Tip's

life the tide slowly receded; an hour after we had landed Tip was lying high and not very dry, so Rogan and Ern let him stretch his tired old head out on the sand and strive to recuperate. Then they staggered up the beach and fell headlong, even as I had fallen, and thus we lay while the stars paled and the gray light began to show in the east.

Ern Givens was first to get up. He staggered up the beach and returned with an armful of driftwood. Then he staggered away again and returned with some dry grasses and seaweed. Next he took a match-safe out of his pocket and discovered he had dry matches. So he lighted a fire; then he lighted another and when he had both blazing high he dragged Pat Rogan up between them and undressed him, cursed him lovingly and called him an old fool and told him to thaw out and quit making such a row about it, which seemed a trifle unjust, since Rogan was as silent as the grave and couldn't have uttered a word if his life had depended on it!

Having started Rogan along the path he should follow, Ern stripped and warmed his own chilled body. Then he dried out Rogan's uniform and put it back on Rogan, half dried his own and dressed and announced that he was going to look for help.

There was a little path leading up along the face of the yellow cliff that buttressed the beach, and it was light enough now to make out this path clearly.

"That path must lead to a house, Pat," Ern declared, and started toward it.

Suddenly I saw him stop. Down the path a girl was coming, and half-way down she halted and gazed at us.

I suppose we were a strange sight there in the early dawn light. My yellow hide was covered with sand and shreds of seaweed; my mane and tail were tangled and wet. Tip, apparently lifeless, lay prone just beyond low-water mark; Rogan, sockless and shoeless and with trousers unlaced at the calves, was lying flat on his back between the two dying fires, and Ern Givens, capless, with rumpled hair, but otherwise with his uniform intact, was standing on the beach, with his legs spread apart, bracing himself, while he stared up at her.

The girl called to us something in a language that I did not understand.

"You'll have to come again, miss," Ern croaked back at her. "I don't get you. We're American soldiers."

"Ah! *Américains—soldats américains,*" the girl cried, and fled up the path and out of sight.

Ern plodded after her. In about ten minutes he came back with her and in each hand he carried a long black bottle.

"Have a shot of rum, Pat," he yelled. "I'm two ahead of you, so fly at it."

"Glory be," murmured poor Rogan, and Ern stuck the bottle to his buddy's blue lips. I thought Rogan would never let it go, but when he did he sat up and looked around. Just then old Tip groaned and tried to raise his weary head.

"It's good for man or baste, Ernie, lad," Rogan mumbled, and crawled away down the beach toward Tip. Ernie followed and together they lifted Tip's head, jerked open his mouth and stuck the neck of the bottle into the corner of it. Nor did they stop until

they had emptied it into the old boy. Then, leaving him to digest it, they came to me and slipped me what remained of the other bottle.

It all but set me afire inside and made me cough considerably, but it put new life into me. In a few minutes I felt a warm glow all through me and tried to get up. With the assistance of Rogan and Ern I did get up and moved over toward the fire, where the girl came and stroked me on the nose and said things to me that I didn't understand. She was crying softly, but when she saw what a hard job Ern and Rogan were having trying to get old Tip on his feet she forgot her tears and, like a good sport, went down to help them.

If I hadn't been so tired I would have laughed to see that sweet girl get hold of Tip's tail and lift on it; when Tip got his forefeet under him and was sitting up this strange girl cheered madly and cried, *"En avant, mon camarade, en avant."*

They let Tip rest a few minutes and gather himself; then with Rogan steadying his head and Ern and the girl lifting at his rear, they all heaved together and up came Tip. He would have fallen again if Ern and that fine girl hadn't steadied him on both sides.

Well, they all went at Tip with their knuckles, kneading him and punching life and circulation back into him. The rum and the rub-down got some of the chill off him and presently, well supported on each side, he staggered up the beach beyond high-water mark and lay down in the dry sand. The girl cheered again and shook hands with Ern and Rogan.

"My good Gawd," breathed Rogan, "what a fine

young woman she is, to be sure! An' here I am, head over heels in love wit' her, an' divil a word of her lingo can I speak or undherstand, bad cess to me. Well, Ernie, me lad, I'll promise ye wan thing an' that's this: if I survive this war I'll marry that one if she'll have me."

"You sentimental Mick," roared Ern Givens. "Not that I blame you, Pat, because she's sure one lalapalooza; but has it occurred to you that I might want to court her myself?"

"Age before beauty, me lad. Glory be, but would ye look at the black eyes of her? And her lips like ripe shtrawberries."

"I think we're in France, Pat. Got any money? You'd ruined a craps game just before the battle started."

Rogan pulled out a wad of wet bills. "Fine," said Ern Givens. "We'll buy some fodder for Tip and the Professor and bring it and a couple of buckets of water down here for them. Perhaps this damsel will sell us a couple of blankets to put on them. Then we'll invest in another bottle of rum and pay her for the two we've had already. After that we'll buy some eats and rent a feather bed and turn in. There's a little village up yonder back of the cliff."

Rogan sighed. "I wonder if there's a doctor there, Ernie. I'm unwell."

The girl got him by one arm and Ern got him by the other and between them they half led, half dragged him up the path in the face of that yellow cliff. As they disappeared old Tip raised his head and looked at me comically. He waggled his right ear forward

and his left ear executed "To the rear! March!" He was all lit up like a cathedral.

"Well, you swimmin' fool," he demanded, "what do you think of this little old war as far as you've followed it?"

"It's terrible, Tip," I admitted.

"Terrible, hell," Tip brayed sarcastically. "It's better than no war at all. Oh, Lord, I'm cock-eyed! For the second time in my long service. And Rogan did it both times. He's terrible—and I love him. Rah! for Pat Rogan. Rah! Rah! Rah! Tiger!"

And he rolled over and immediately slept the sleep of the conscience-free and the weary.

Utterly exhausted as I was after my long swim, I could not help wishing that the rum Ern had given me would affect me as it had Tip. Apparently it had made him forget how tired he was—lifted him out of the slough of despond incident to his half-drowned condition. But beyond a slight giddiness and a sense of well-being not at all in consonance with my physical condition, the rum had no effect on me. I learned later that we were given this rum to stimulate our heart action, which sent the blood coursing through our frozen veins and warmed us. Evidently it had performed a similar function for Ern Givens and Rogan, so they decided to play no favorites, since, as Rogan declared, what was good for man was good for beast.

However, to get back to my story. Old Tip slept—what with the rum and profound weariness—and as I stood there gazing at him it occurred to me that a little shut-eye wouldn't be a bad thing for the wan-

dering son of Sir Nigel. The sun was up by now and warming the sands, so I lay down perfectly flat and relaxed all my muscles.

When I awoke it was late afternoon and Tip was sitting up straight watching me.

"Well, Prof," he sang out cheerfully, "how would a couple or five or six buckets of ice water do you? Got a hang-over? My mouth feels as if a Moro family had just moved in."

I tried to straighten up but fell back with a groan. Tip chuckled. "You've discovered a few muscles you never knew you possessed before, eh, Prof? That's what swimming does for one," he jeered.

"I'm foundered," I gasped.

"Guess Ern and Rogan must be foundered, too, Prof. Neither has been down to see us. . . . Hello, here come Ern and that girl now."

Sure enough they were coming down the path along the yellow bluff. Ern was carrying something in a sack and stretched between the shoulders of him and the girl was a stick; on the stick four buckets swung. I knew it was food and water and I nickered joyously. Tip hee-hawed a welcome, too.

How good those two buckets of water tasted! Just three long sucks per bucket and they were empty, whereupon Ern and the girl went back and returned presently with four more. Ern gave us each two additional buckets at fifteen-minute intervals; then he spread a gunny-sack on the sand under each of our noses and poured out a good big helping of crushed oats. I learned afterward that he had crushed those oats in a little old coffee-mill. While we were eating he

tied heavy woolen blankets on us, gave us each a pat on the nose and said:

"Now, then, at ease until I can buy you some hay. Tomorrow morning I'll see about getting you up off the beach."

He was turning to go, when the girl clutched his arm and pointed out to sea. They stood there, staring. I could not turn around to stare with them, but Tip was facing seaward, so I asked him what they were looking at.

"There's a piece of wreckage floating out there beyond the waves and something is moving around on it—something small and white," he replied.

Ern put his fingers in his mouth and whistled shrilly; faintly to our ears came the sound of a joyous bark.

"It's Rogan's dog, Jeff," Tip grunted. "He had to leave Jeff behind to die last night—and the nosey little rascal wouldn't die, that's all. It was too long a swim for him, but like a sensible little critter he managed to climb upon a piece of wreckage—and there he is."

"He'll get spilled off it when his raft strikes the breakers."

"Let him spill and be damned to him," Tip answered profanely. "If he can't swim three hundred yards to shore he's no dog of Rogan's."

Ern kept whistling and Jeff kept barking. "He's trying to get up enough courage to abandon his raft and swim for it," Tip informed me. "Come on, Jeff, you little idiot. Swim for it. Don't exhaust yourself jumping up and down. Come on, Jeff. Let's go!"

Tip, like all mules, was a most practical person and believed in conserving his strength. If he slipped off a road and rolled downhill with his pack, he never struggled at the bottom. Not old Tip! He just waited for his buddies to come down and take the pack off him. He kept murmuring and cussing under his breath now, urging Jeff to make the try—and when Jeff was well into the breakers and a wave upended his raft and spilled him, Tip brayed with relief and then was silent, watching. . . .

Ten minutes later Ern Givens, wet to his neck, walked up the beach with Jeff in his arms! It seems poor Jeff was all in by the time he reached the wash of the surf, and was rolling around helpless and drowning fast when Ern waded in and rescued him. I saw him take Jeff by the hind legs and spill the water out of him, then slap him vigorously. The poor waif appeared to be dead, but Ern worked over him for half an hour and finally the little dog wagged his tail. Ern let out a whoop and the girl danced around them both, while Ern kept slapping Jeff in the short ribs to chirk up his heart action. . . . Presently he picked Jeff up and carried him away.

"I'm mighty glad, for Rogan's sake," Tip declared. "It must have broken his heart to have to abandon Jeff last night. Remember how he sneaked Jeff aboard in his barrack bag? Setters weren't meant for the rough deal Jeff has had. They do not stand cold very well, and water is not their natural element. I do hope Jeff doesn't get pneumonia, even if the little son of a gun used to nip my heels every chance he got. However, I could never hold a real grudge against him, on

account of Rogan. I used to pretend I couldn't kick his brains out even if I wanted to."

Well, about sundown, Ern and the girl came down to the beach again with a huge bundle of hay and some more water.

"Pauvre cheval!" said the girl, stroking my nose. *"Il est très fatigué."* This means, as I subsequently discovered, "Poor horse! He is very tired." Then she went over and caressed Tip. She was a fine big girl about twenty-three years old, I should judge. She had black hair and black eyes and very red lips and she wore wooden shoes and an old sweater. I assumed from her hands that she worked rather hard for a living.

"What do you think of her?" I asked Tip when she and Ern had left us for the night.

"She'll do. I hope Rogan doesn't die. He isn't so old, you know—about thirty-eight or -nine. He enlisted at sixteen or seventeen and has been in the service twenty-two years. We need more Rogans in the service, and if he married that girl and reproduced his species I'll bet they'd be humdingers."

"Eh, you romantic old fool," I taunted him. "Who'd have thought it?"

"Well," Tip replied sadly, "when you're without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity, as I am—oh, what the hell! Go to sleep and in the morning we'll see if we can get up on our pins."

CHAPTER XXIII

IT was some job getting on our pins next morning, I assure you, but with the aid of Ern and the girl and considerable vocal encouragement we succeeded. I didn't walk like a horse. In fact, I walked like a clothes-horse. When Tip got on his feet he stretched all four legs in succession to shake the kinks out and make certain he was all there, and at sight of this exhibition of mule intelligence the girl laughed heartily and rewarded him with a carrot. Then she gave me one.

"All's well that ends well," said Tip philosophically. "Fall in my squad! Forward! Ho-o-o-o! Route step! I crave my rations and a look at Rogan."

It was a hard pull up that cliff path but we made it. Before us the country was flat, with a little village in the foreground, and toward this village Ern and the girl led us. As we came stiffly up its single street a great number of women, girls, children and a few very old men came out and cheered us.

"First cheer I ever got," Tip remarked sadly, "but you, you handsome devil, are accustomed to them. So this is France, eh? Well, it looks good to me."

"How do you know it's France, Tip?"

"Well, it isn't England, or we'd know what these folks are saying about us, and it isn't Spain because I have a fair working knowledge of that language. And

it must be a combatant country because I see no young men about. They're in the army and, of course, if it was Germany they'd have Ern in the mill."

"That sounds logical," I agreed.

They watered us at the village fountain and then the girl piloted us up a very dirty alley, all foul with manure and cluttered up with geese and ducks. And flies! My word! Ern shook his head as he observed these foes of all military men and animals.

"Got to clean this mess up," I heard him mutter.

They put us in a barn and bedded us down thickly with straw, fed us and left us; and for three weeks we saw Ern but twice a day. In the morning, after cleaning the stable, feeding, watering and grooming us, he rode each of us for an hour to give us exercise. After that he turned us over to a little French boy who took us out in a field and herded us all day while we grazed. In the evening Ern watered us again, gave us our ration of hay and grain, wiped us down and left us for the night.

He had little to say; his face was very drawn and serious, so we knew Rogan must be very ill and battling for his life. Jeff slept with us (he had regained all his old-time vitality) but as we could not converse with him he could tell us nothing. However, we hoped for the best and tried to read signs of it in Ern's face; the day he came into our barn whistling we knew that all was well with the world and that in due course we should see Rogan's pleasant face again.

I learned subsequently that Rogan had had pneumonia, but that an old French doctor had pulled him through, in combination with good nursing on the part

of that French girl, whose name, by the way, was Laurette. She dropped all of ten pounds on that job, for she was in attendance on Rogan night and day. A good fighter, that girl. Rogan said afterward that the only reason he survived was because he couldn't bear to die and leave that fine girl to somebody that might not appreciate her.

"And if that's a dig at me," Ern remarked at the time, "you're barking up the wrong alley, because I have a girl back home that speaks my language and doesn't wear wooden shoes."

To which Rogan replied, ignoring this slam and putting over a slam of his own, "Faith, I'll bet ye a ripe peach she knows how to spind yer pay-day!"

It was a great moment when Rogan, supported on each arm by Ern and Laurette, came out on the front steps of the girl's house and sat down in the sun, with a blanket around him. When he was comfortably settled, Ern led Tip and me around to visit him!

"Hello, Prof," he called. "You're lookin' yer ould self again." But he held out his thin hand to Tip and snapped his fingers. "Come here to me, ye black little lump av sin," he crooned. "Whin I can get around to it I'll have ye cited in regimental ordhers for gallanthry in action over an' above the call av duty. Come, Tip, ye ould walloper."

And Tip, his mule's heart bursting with love, climbed right up the front step and nibbled yearningly at Rogan's hand and kissed him, while Rogan held the long face close to his and stroked it.

"A horse is a horse," he told Ern Givens, "but for rough, dirrty work in a dirrty campaign give me an

uncomplainin' mule that'll live on scenery an' not lose his head undher fire."

Presently Ern backed Tip down into the street again. "Feeling pretty cheerful, are you, Pat?" he queried. "Could you stand another visitor?"

Rogan replied that he was finer than frog's hair and could stand a visit from the Kaiser. Then Ern whistled—and back in our barn Laurette unleashed Jeff, who came bounding down the alley to the street.

"For the love av God! Jeff!" Rogan cried, and little Jeff went up those steps like a white streak and leaped up into Rogan's lap and licked his face and barked with joy. Then he ran out into the street and raced furiously in circles half a dozen times, which is a dog's way of announcing that he's so happy he doesn't know how to express himself sanely. And when he was all out of breath, Jeff ran up and jumped on Rogan again —and Rogan's eyes filled with tears. Laurette wiped them away with the hem of her old sweater and then, right before everybody, Rogan took her hand and kissed it very reverently.

There is something about French girls radically different from the girls here at home. If they love a man it never occurs to them to hide the fact. They don't seem to care to have a man pursue them. If they want him at all they want him when they want him—and I reckon Laurette wanted Rogan. At any rate, she seemed to realize he was hers now for the taking. The sea had washed this soldier up to her; she had fought for his life, and her own life had in it little of happiness or cheer and much labor. I reckon she yearned for comforting and care.

He had come to France to fight for her country as well as his own—so he was doubly dear to her. She knew that as soon as he was able to be on his way he would leave her and she might never see him again. Why not, then, while it lasted, accept the little happiness that had come so strangely into her gray life?

She put her strong young arms around Rogan and held his whiskered face close to hers and wept with him and kissed him over and over, while the people in the street looked on approvingly. Nobody laughed, nobody even snickered, nobody thought it an occasion for jest. Not much! They all came up and touched Rogan's hand and said friendly things to him, while some of the older women kissed Laurette. Then they all cheered, and Rogan began to feel foolish and blushed, whereat all the women teased him and Laurette. Fortunately Rogan couldn't understand them!

"Now, here, Ernie, me lad," he said, when we were all together and alone at last, "ye see an act av God. Divil a worrd av French can I speak, barrin' *parlez-vous français,* an' the dear Lord knows I've not proposed to this girrl, yet I'm an engaged man. Bad luck to me, what business have I, a soger on active service, engagin' myself to a girrl I may never see again?"

Ern scratched his head and considered the situation. "Why worry about it, Pat?" he suggested finally. "We're both officially dead. We could live here the rest of our lives and the United States Army would never know the difference."

"What blackguardly business is this ye're proposin', Ernie?" Rogan demanded.

"I mean that nobody is chasing us with a search-

warrant, Pat, so you can take your time getting well, and in about two weeks we'll pull off a wedding. Then you can spend two weeks more on a honeymoon, and after that we'll begin to look for the Remount Service in France and report ourselves for duty. If they ask what delayed us we'll tell them you were sick and I had to nurse you; and we didn't know anything about the French language or France, and were broke and got lost and have reported just as soon as we could; and nobody can challenge our story."

"Great," Rogan grinned, "except in one particular. We're out of the Remount Service now an' wit' the help av God an' G. H. Q. we'll shtay out. 'Tis back to the ould batthery for us, Ernie, me lad. Our serrvice records wint down wit' that ship, so we'll report to Sam Burwell an' he, like a good, sinsible man, will have the regimintal surgeon make out new service records for us as of the date of our enlistmints. Who'll ever know the difference?"

Ern was too new to the service to understand what Rogan was driving at, so the latter explained:

"Whin you enlisted, Ernie, the medical officer that examined ye wrote in a little book per name, age, physical description, home address, the name of yer parents if any, yer next av kin an' a lot of other information about ye. Thin he had ye sign yer name whin ye took the oath av enlistmint, afther which he certified to the fact that he had enlisted ye, an' signed his own name an' rank.

" 'Twas our regimintal chief surgeon that enlisted us, an' shtarted our service records. Whin we were thransferred to Remount, the batthery commander

wrote in the proper space, on that serrvice record: 'Thransferred to Remount Station Number'—whatever the damn thing was, wit' the date—'an' under authority av Gineral Ordher Number'—whatever it was—'Headquarthers of our division, Camp Doniphan, Oklohama, U. S. A.' Thin he signed it, blotted away his tears an' sint us into exile.

"Later he sint our service records over to the office av the regimintal adjutant, who forwarded thim to the adjutant av the Remount station an' wit' that act all record av our serrvice in the ould batthery was obliterated. Whin we were ordhered to France, another indorsemint was made on our serrvice records av that fact, the name of the place to which we were to report for djuty an' a notation of the proper ordher assignin' us there.

"Ye must know, Ernie, that wherever a soger goes his serrvice record goes wit' him, an' that bein' so, I know, as thrue as God is me judge, that your serrvice record an' mine wint aboord that thransport. An' since 'tis not human for an adjutant to burrden himself wit' serrvice records whilst preparin' for a sudden night swim in the English Channel, I'm safe in statin' that our milith'ry records are now at the bottom av the sea, an' all that's known about us is the fact that the original passenger list retained by the boardin' officer at Mobile shows that Privates Rogan an' Givens were seen to go aboord that thransport. We were checked in officially an' checked out unofficially, so until we return to djuty, provin' that we're men av conscience, we'll be reported as dead to our next av kin, an' dhropped from the payroll."

"Hell's fire," said Ern, "I must cable my mother. Who's your next of kin, Pat?"

"I have none, Ernie."

"But how about your war-risk insurance? Surely we must confess we're alive, else the government will pay the policies—"

"I have no insurance policy. For why should I pay out seven and a half a month that I might as well enjoy meself wit' to provide a fortune for somebody I don't give a hoot in a holler for?"

"Well, my mother is the beneficiary of my policy and I've got the policy in my pocket this minute—a bit disfigured from salt water but legible. I had intended mailing it to her before we sailed but forgot about it. So she can't collect on it until she gets it, and when I cable her to disregard the report of my death and then send her the policy, she'll wait until she knows for certain I'm a corpse before submitting her claim. You going to take out some insurance for Laurette, Pat?"

Pat squirmed. "Damn their red tape," he growled, "a soger can't leave his insurance to his sweetheart. She must be related to him—wife, mother, sister, aunt or grandmother. Holy Moses, I'll have to marry Laurette afther all if I'm to lave her that ten thousand dollars."

"Right! But to get back to the subject of our service records."

"They're lost. There isn't the scratch av a pen in France to prove that our division commander, out av the great love he had for us, blooeyed us from artillery to Remount. An' this is well, since it gives us an

opporchunity to come back to the artillery wit'out consultin' the ould vagabone."

"What if we should run into him some day?"

"Shmall danger. Ernie, he'll not be in France very long for whin the big pinch comes 'tis only the men big enough to shtand pinchin' that survive. The ould dugouts and incompetents may get by in thrainin' camps, but on the fields av glory they blow up an' the benzine board finds for thim a job more suited to their talents."

"So then we're definitely out of Remount, Pat?"

"Until we choose to go back and report ourselves, which we do not choose to do. We must find the ould batth'ry—"

"But Sam Burwell can't take us on again without proper authority, Pat. You know that. He'd be two privates in excess on his morning report and the colonel would want to know how come."

"So he would, Ernie, so he would. But ye'll grant that we'll be welcomed home, nevertheless?"

"I think so."

"Far be it from the Ould Man or the batth'ry commander to chase out of that part of France two good men an' thrue that nobody owns, since they're officially dead. The supply sergeant will lind us a pair av blankets an' new uniforms, an' the mess sergeant will feed us until the arrival av authority to annex us officially. As for quarthers, the Lord will provide. Sure the Ould Man'll write to G. H. Q. an' relate our histhory: how we so loved our batth'ry we wept whin we left it; how we escaped from the sea an' come back to it like lovin' childher, bringin' an army mule we'd salvaged;

how we're officially lost to Remount now an' wasted on it anyhow, so please, Gineral Pershing, may he have us back, an' shtart us from scratch wit' a duplicate serrvice record?"

"You think there's a chance, Pat?"

"I know there is. G. H. Q."—by the way, O'Malley, that means General Headquarters—"is much too busy wit' affairs av shtate to concern itself wit' the fate av two privates in an army av two million, so the first assistant chief av staff that letther is handed to will endorse it 'Approved,' an' thin a field clerk will put an ordher through formally assignin' us to the ould regimint, an' whin that ordher arrives the adjutant will pick us up on the regimintal rolls and assign us back to the ould batth'ry—an' that night at retreat I'll be stable sergeant again."

"What'll I be, Pat?"

"Well, since ye have little or no value in a milith'ry way, 'tis probable ye'll be a cook's police the firrst day. Thin ye'll do a guard, an' as soon as Sam Burwell can find an excuse to bust a sergeant ye'll get yer chevrons again."

"Granted we get duplicate service records, how about Tip? His service record went down with the ship, too."

"Tip," said Rogan with a smile like a cat that has just swallowed the canary, "will unofficially be attached to the outfit for rations. He'll be an excess mule with no accountability on him, consequently he will require no duplicate serrvice record. His record is in the hearts av his counthrymen, an' as an excess mule he'll be loved more than ever, since an excess mule is a

direct gift from God in campaign. We never have enough mules as it is, what wit' the wastage; we can always use more than they'll give us. God knows, many's the gun I've helped haul because they wouldn't."

"And the Professor—"

"Is a civilian, an' was never anything else. Officially, his half-brother died for him. Remember, he bears no government brand."

"Won't Captain Burwell be amazed to see the Professor again?"

"Have a care would you tell him," Rogan warned. "All human beings enjoy a pleasant surprise. Do you, Ernie, like the good man, write a letther to the batth'ry commandher, addhressin' him in care av the ould regimint, A. E. F., France, askin' him will he let ye have the equivalent in French francs, av the two hundhred-an'-fifty-dollar check ye enclose to him."

"We don't need two hundred dollars. We have a hundred and fifty dollars in good old U. S. gold certificates."

"We must have an excuse to hear from him, Ernie. His letther will give us the name av the town he's in; then we'll find that town on the map an' away we'll go, hell for leather, back home. Thrue for ye we do not need more money right now, but we're at war, Ernie, me bhoy, an' war is filled wit' horrible surprises. 'Tis not to me taste to find meself broke an' on the bum in a foreign land. I'll have me rations three times daily, an' a bed to shleep in."

"There are American soldiers all over France, Pat. We'd never go hungry or homeless."

"There are milith'ry police all over France, too," Rogan reminded him, "an' 'tis not in me mind to be picked up by wan av those laddy-bucks as a skulker or deserter an' sint down to some brigade depot. I'll not be a casual—me wit' me long serrvice—to be sint to the firrst outfit that needs casualty replacements. What if they sint us to the infanthry? Why, our hearts would break. An' what if they sint us to a labor battalion? We'd die av the disgrace. No, Ernie, we were red-legs wanst an' red-legs we'll be again, plaze God, until we're musthered out of the serrvice."

"How will the military police know we're soldiers? We'll tell them we're a couple of Americans ashore from a steamer, for a look at the war."

"Faith, we'll do that! 'Tis as good a shtory as I could think up meself, but be the same token we'll not be in khaki whin we tell it. We must buy each av us a suit av civilian clothes an' a couple av saddles an' bridles, if we're to go stravagin' the counthry, like ould Don Quixote an' Sancho Panza, lookin' for adventure."

Ern thought there was sense in that, so he got out his little water-soaked check-book and wrote a check on the Siskiyou County Bank at Yreka, California, although he did ask Rogan if Sam Burwell might not, reasonably enough, decline to cash the check. "He doesn't know whether I have a cent in bank back home or not."

"Would you cash his check for two hundred and fifty dollars, Ernie?"

"Of course I would, provided I had the money handy. He's a gentleman."

"How do you know he is? The Presidint can make an officer but only God an' the right breedin' can make a gintleman."

"You Hibernian idiot! I know a man when I see one."

"So does Sam Burwell," Rogan retorted sagely. "Tell him ye're stationed in this village wit' me, for the presint, an' as we are undher some expinse an' see no signs of pay-day or paymasther, inasmuch as we are detached indefinitely from our command, 'twill be a load off both our minds if he'll cash this check. Say nothin' more to him except to presint yer respectful duty to him an' say that I do likewise."

So Ern wrote the letter and posted it. We waited two weeks but received no answer. In the meantime Ern had paid all our bills—the doctor and the apothecary, Laurette for board and lodging for him and Rogan, and an old peasant for forage, grazing and the rent of the stable for Tip and me. Also, at Rogan's earnest solicitation, Ern had bought a complete outfit of glad rags for Laurette—a nice blue suit, silk stockings, a pair of shoes and a hat and something else that Ern called doodads. She had refused to accept pay for nursing Rogan, but after some urging she consented to accept a present.

The first Sunday she wore her new clothes Rogan went to mass with her, and to show what a good sport he was and how little he cared for money he put a one-hundred-franc note on the collection plate. Laurette (so I learned from subsequent conversation between Ern and Rogan) tried to make change for it, but there wasn't more than ten francs on the plate so the bet

had to ride as it lay. The girl was horrified at his prodigality and thought him a heller and a waster. As for the village curé (that's what they call the priest) that hundred francs threw him so far out of gear he went crazy, devoted his sermon to fulsome praise of the A. E. F. and wept right there on the altar. Rogan told Ern that after mass everybody came up and shook his hand.

"Sure they did," said Ern, who was not a church-going man (although probably he would have been if he had had as good an excuse as that other heretic, Rogan). "They wanted to get next to the good thing. The way you spend money, Pat, a feller would think I make it out in the barn. What do they use for money where you were raised? Clam-shells or woodpecker heads?"

"Will ye shut up?" Rogan pleaded. "What do we care for a hundred francs? The money from Sam Burwell will be along directly."

"Then it's coming by slow freight, Pat."

"How much have we left?"

"Thirty-seven dollars and a handful of monkey-money."

"What the devil have ye done wit' our bank roll?" Rogan roared.

"I've paid our just debts, that's what I've done with it. I've given maybe five dollars to the kids around town and bought a few rounds of drink for his Honor, the Mayor, but you've chucked away a whole hundred francs to the Church. A dollar is worth five francs and sixty-five centimes. Why, you've wasted over eighteen dollars!"

Rogan thought this over a little while and finally decided that while no fair man could expect him to be a short sport with his girl's pastor, he would even matters up by including that hundred francs in the curé's fee for marrying him and Laurette. He was so serious about this that Ern burst into a roar of laughter, and to prove he wasn't holding any grudge because of Rogan's prodigality, he rode me bareback eight miles to a good-sized town next day and bought a nice new collar for Jeff, some English tobacco for Rogan—providentially Rogan had his pipe in his pocket the night he went overboard—a tooth-brush and tooth-paste, a razor, shaving-brush, soap and strop, a pair of shears and a comb.

These two understood each other, and Ern had observed that Rogan was very restless. As an engaged man he did not feel right. He missed the sort of baths he'd been accustomed to; he missed his tooth-brush, his morning shave and his weekly hair-cut; he felt unclean and every fiber of his military soul revolted against such a condition. So when Ern got back he gave Rogan the tooth-brush and paste; then he shaved his buddy and cut his hair and after that he heated water in Laurette's kitchen, emptied it into a wash-tub in the barn and gave Rogan a good scrubbing, for the old boy was still pretty weak and required some help.

The necessity for acquiring a working knowledge of the French language was so apparent to Ern Givens that, a few days after Rogan became convalescent and could leave his bed, Ern purchased some French-English books and Laurette proceeded to teach him and

Rogan. They plodded along, making heavy going, during those two weeks they waited for an answer from Ern's letter to Sam Burwell; and Rogan was quite the despair of Laurette because (as he explained to Ern) his French proved him English, while his English proved him Irish. He would talk French with a Celtic burr. One day he got so disgusted trying to pronounce the word *rue*—street—that he swore in Spanish.

Right then and there his French lessons ceased. It developed that Laurette's childhood had been spent in the Basses-Pyrénées—close to the Spanish frontier—and she spoke Spanish as well as she did French. And inasmuch as more than ten years of his life had been spent soldiering in Cuba, the Canal Zone and the Philippines, Rogan spoke Spanish surprisingly well. Instantly he informed Laurette that he loved her to distraction and was never going to get over it. Then he asked her to marry him and she put her arms around his neck, right in Ern Givens's presence, and kissed him and said she would.

Ern warned him to make a careful reconnaissance before accepting battle. "She may be marrying you for your money, Pat. Remember you gave the padre a hundred francs, and only multimillionaires do that in France. Have you told her about your war-risk insurance?"

Rogan just glared at him, and talked Spanish with Laurette all day, nor would he even interpret an occasional question put to her by Ern. Yes, Rogan knew how to get even for Ern's dirty digs.

He came out to the barn that evening as Ern was

putting us up for the night. "Just think, Ernie, lad," he almost groaned. "We've been here a month, an' for half that time I've been dyin' to talk sweet nothin's to me darlin'. Faith, I'm set now, an' be the Great Gun av Athlone, I'll make up for the lost time. It's terrible, so it is, to have to make love wit' winks an' arm signals."

The very next day Ern Givens received a registered letter from Sam Burwell, containing a trifle over fourteen hundred francs. There was a nice note from Sam also, saying how glad he was to hear from Ern and Rogan and that if they would let him know the name and station of the unit to which they had been assigned he would see what he could do toward having them transferred back to the battery, although he doubted his ability to make that grade. He said he was glad to oblige Ern by cashing his check and had been delayed in answering because he had been ill with influenza and confined to his bed in quarters—hence unable to get to town and cash two hundred and fifty dollars on his letter of credit. He informed them that the outfit was at Camp De Souge, near Bordeaux, training, and would be there for another month.

The next day Ern purchased a map of France and an automobile touring book, and with the aid of Laurette they proceeded to outline the route to Bordeaux in red ink. The distance was in kilometers, so they reduced that to miles and Rogan sat thinking hard.

"Thirty days more they'll be at De Souge. Hum-m! Well, I'll be married tomorrow or the day afther, and spend the next two weeks in connubial bliss, whilst you, Ernie, prepare for the journey. We must have sad-

dles an' bridles, an' civilian clothes an' Tip an' the Professor must be shod."

"If I can find shoes and nails I'll shoe them myself, Pat."

"If you couldn't I'd do it meself. I doubt me, however, if ye'll find mule shoes in France, so do you get some light plates and I'll reforge them to fit Tip. The village blacksmith has gone to the war but his forge is ready to me hand."

"If we march thirty miles a day we can get to De Souge in a week," Ern figured. "Ample time. Well, get busy on your marriage, Pat."

So Rogan and Laurette called to see the mayor, who said he couldn't do a thing for them unless Rogan produced a birth certificate. It seems it's against the French law to marry people who haven't been born officially. So Laurette spoke to Rogan in Spanish, and Rogan produced a hundred-franc note, which the mayor said would do as well as a birth certificate, provided Rogan was certain he had been born, and could tell him when and where.

But his Honor reckoned without Laurette. Before Rogan could slip the mayor the bill Laurette got her hands on it and, after directing the mayor to make out the marriage license, she went up to the post-office and got that bill changed. The marriage license was ready when she returned, so Laurette slipped the mayor his regular fee and gave him a five-franc tip. On account of being short-changed that way the mayor was very angry, and a furious word battle ensued between him and Laurette. He called her a camel and she called him a camel with two humps. Then he called her a

hippopotamus, and she called him an infected rabbit, and there being nothing worse in a Frenchman's mind than an infected rabbit, he shook his fist under her nose. Fortunately, Ern Givens had been attracted to the scene by the angry recriminations, so when the mayor shook his fist under Laurette's nose Ern felt that the moment for action had arrived.

"I'll teach you to threaten my buddy's sweetheart," he roared, and cuffed the mayor—once. The mayor immediately broke down and wept, so Ern apologized in English and Rogan translated his apology to Laurette in Spanish. Then Laurette translated it into French and gave the mayor two francs additional; whereupon he accepted the apology and the entire party shook hands all around and went up to the church, where the curé married them.

Ern was best man, of course, and a friend of Laurette was bridesmaid. Rogan wanted Ern to buy the bridesmaid a decent outfit for the ceremony, but Ern said we couldn't afford any more extravagance, and gave the girl ten francs and a kiss, which pleased her greatly—according to Rogan—whom I often heard relate the tale subsequently.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE day following Rogan's marriage, Ern and Tip and I went over to the big town eight miles away. Ern was armed with a note in French from Laurette, informing whom it might concern of the things he desired to buy. At the entrance to the town Ern showed this letter to an old lady, who promptly led us to a saddlery shop and there Ern bargained for two superannuated French field saddles and bridles.

The battle was long and bitterly contested, so finally Ern played his last trump. He jumped on me and started to ride away. A bargain was struck at once. Then Ern bought two saddle-blankets from a woman whose son, having been killed in the war, would never occupy the spare bed at home again, and after a long search we found some horseshoes for me and some mule shoes that would fit Tip.

It takes so long to drive any kind of a bargain with a Frenchman that the day was far gone before Ern succeeded in getting those mule shoes. The Frenchman who had them for sale appeared to realize that he had the only mule shoes in that part of France, and in the end Ern had to pay through the nose for them!

We jogged back to our village for dinner, and the next day Ern had Laurette measure her husband for his suit of civilian clothes. Armed with these measurements, Ern saddled me and rode back to that big

town. He had made his purchases and we were on our way home, when up the street came a big khaki-colored American staff car with a sergeant driving it, so we knew there must be a major-general inside.

There was. And who? Nobody else but the pin-head major-general of our division—the horse-thief who had blooeyed Ern and Rogan to Remount. Four of his staff were with him, and at sight of an American soldier mounted on the best-looking horse in France (pardon me, Taffy, but the truth may not always be withheld) they were, naturally enough, interested. Indeed, I believe they all recognized me, for I had been a marked horse at Camp Doniphan and undoubtedly they had seen me frequently cavorting around the drill-ground there. As I subsequently learned, however, what particularly interested them was the sight of an American soldier in a portion of France where no American forces were or ever would be billeted!

The car slid to a halt, and the general stuck his head out. "Come here, my man," he ordered Ern. "Ha, you! The man Givens, eh? Thought I recognized you. Come here, I say. Dismount! Don't you know enough to dismount and stand to head when an officer summons you to report to him?"

Ern dismounted, took me by the bridle, walked up to the car and saluted. "Private Givens reports to the general," he said.

"What are you doing here, Givens?"

"Reporting to the general, sir."

"None of your infernal impudence, Givens. I'll have a look at that horse."

He got out and inspected my hoofs. "So! Not a

government horse, eh? The same horse you had in Doniphan? How did you get him here?"

"I swam him here, sir."

"Colonel," said the general, turning to his chief of staff, "make a note of this man's impertinent answer to a legal question. So you swam your horse to France, eh? How did you get here yourself?"

"I put on a life-preserver, sir, looped the halter-shank around my horse's neck and was towed by him."

The general turned to his staff. "This man is, obviously, ripe for the psychopathic ward," he declared. He turned again to Ern Givens. "What are you doing in this part of France?"

"I came to this town to purchase some articles for my personal use, sir."

"Who sent you here?"

"Former Stable Sergeant Pat Rogan, of Battery F, ——th Field Artillery. The general will recall that in Doniphan he blooeyed me from that outfit to Remount for declining to sell him my horse, and the following week the general also blooeyed Sergeant Rogan for declining to loan him his shooting-dog."

"Silence!"

Ern was silent, but his eyes, cool, hard and blue, roved over the general in a steady stare of hatred and contempt. Behind the general's back the staff looked aghast.

"So that fellow Rogan is with you, is he? How did he get here?"

"He helped himself to a government mule and the mule, swimming, towed him ashore also."

"Where are you two billeted?"

"In the village of Neuilly, eight miles from here, sir."

"Who is your commanding officer?"

"I don't know, sir. We had one on the horse transport, but he probably drowned when the ship was torpedoed."

"Perhaps not a psychopathic subject after all, sir," the chief of staff urged gently. "He doesn't look crazy to me, sir."

"I'll be the judge of his sanity, Colonel," the general retorted crisply. "Now then, Givens, answer me this: The ship you came over on was torpedoed, and you got your horse up on deck and Rogan got a mule up on deck; then you both jumped them overboard and swam ashore. Are those the facts in the case?"

"Yes, sir."

"What was the name of your transport?"

"The Tecumseh, sir."

The staff exchanged glances, and the chief of staff, who evidently was a hard man to silence, spoke up.

"Did anything dramatic occur to you or Rogan after you left the doomed transport, Private Givens?"

Ern pondered this for half a minute. "Why, yes, sir, now that you mention it, sir, I believe something dramatic did occur. We swam into the submarine that sunk us. There were three Germans on her deck, so I bumped all three off. Then another Heine stuck his head out the turret to see what the riot was all about and I bumped him off too. You see, sir, I had my pistol. Did my best to save all the government property possible."

The general and his staff looked at each other.

"Good God!" said the chief of staff. "It's the man! His major, floating on a life-raft a little distance away, saw this act of conspicuous gallantry, General, and the Paris editions of the English papers carried the story." And without an instant's hesitation the chief of staff climbed out of the car.

"Let me shake your hand, son," he commanded. "If I had a company of men like you I'd be content to remain a captain all of my days. You're a hell-cracking, non-quitting, fighting fool and if you ever need a friend in the army, command me." And he handed Ern Givens his card. Then he favored his commanding general with a look that said: "Well, you can run a rannikiboo on a friendless private but if you start anything with me I'm the boy who will finish it."

The general grew very red in the face and didn't seem to know what to do—particularly when the remainder of his staff got out and gladly paid the tribute which one brave man never begrudges another. They all assured Ern how happy they were to know that he and Rogan had managed to reach shore, and the chief of staff added that he was going to make it his business to see to it that Ern was recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross.

"Oh, please don't go to any fuss about me, sir," Ern pleaded. "I didn't do anything distinguished. I enlisted to fight in the field artillery, but after I was blooeyed to the Remount Service it didn't seem as if I'd ever get any fighting, so, naturally, when I bumped into a fat chance to get me a few Germans, I had to smother it. Anybody else would have done the same. It's nothing to write home about."

"Ahem! Humph-h-h!" The general was coming up for air. "Tell me, my man, how you managed to ship a civilian horse on a government transport."

"Certainly, sir. There was a half-brother of this horse of mine came to our corrals near Doniphan. He was an exact duplicate of my horse. Now, my horse is the best hazing horse in the world, and because I used him when breaking government horses, the commanding officer sort of overlooked his presence where he had no legal right. And somehow, when we were shipping, my horse was mistaken for the government horse and—"

"You're a brave man, but a damned rascal, Givens," the general interrupted. "However, I have neither the time nor the inclination to pry too closely into this illegal act of yours. Why have you permitted weeks to pass without making some effort to report yourself to the nearest American command?"

"Rogan has been sick with pneumonia, sir, and I had to stick around and nurse him. He's well now and fit to travel, so we were going to start tomorrow and see if we could find a Remount station.

"Well, of course, Rogan would do that. With all his faults he is at least a soldier and would never evade his duty. Where were you going to hunt for a Remount station?"

"Why, we heard there was one down near Bordeaux, sir."

"There is. You'll find your old major down there, no doubt. Well, see that you get going tomorrow and report to him at the earliest possible date."

"We've been troubled in our minds, sir, about the

military police. They'll pick us up, unless we have travel orders—"

"Quite so, quite so, Givens. Colonel, get out a travel order for Private Givens and Rogan."

An orderly sitting in the front seat with the sergeant chauffeur hopped into the passenger compartment, pulled down the collapsible table with which all staff cars are equipped, so the staff can spread maps out on them, dug up a portable typewriter, paper and carbon, and wrote an order, directing Private Ernest Givens, No. 93-631 and Private Patrick Rogan, No. 87-243, Remount Service, together with one horse and one mule, to proceed to the Remount Service at Saint-Sulpice, Gironde, France, and report for duty to the commanding officer thereof.

The chief of staff signed this order and the orderly affixed the division seal and handed a carbon copy to Ern Givens, who thanked the general. Then they all climbed into the car and rolled away and Ern Givens returned to the store where he'd bought the civilian clothes and sold them back to the man for fifty percent of what he had just paid for them.

When we got back to our village Rogan was out in the barn putting hay in our mangers. Ern related his experience with the general, and Rogan listened intently, while a cloud gathered on his dark brow.

"I suppose, Ernie, me son, ye're of the opinion ye've done a smart bit av wurrk tellin' that divil how come ye got to France, an' invigglin' him out of a thravel order?"

Ern admitted he thought he had been pretty foxy in addition to saving some money, and Rogan groaned.

"Why did ye do it?" he roared. "Ye were comfortably dead. Why the divil didn't ye shtay that way?"

"But he caught me and recognized me and asked me questions. I never lie, Rogan. It's so much more comfortable to tell the truth, because then you can forget what you said. But you have to remember your lies so you can repeat them, if necessary."

"The lie," Rogan thundered, "is the bulwark av war. Lies, deceit an' all manner av shenanigans can be used to deceive the inemy; and if that ould blackguard isn't our inemy, who is? He'll sind a copy av that ordher in advance av us to the commandhin' officer av that Remount station at Saint-Sulpice, an' whin we fail to turrn up the country will be raised agin us, as deserters. They'll think we've j'ned Pershing's wanderers."

"Who are Pershing's wanderers?"

"The skulkers from the front—the bums an' vagabones—the A. W. O. L. dhrunks an' deserrters."

"I'm sorry, Pat. I didn't know. But the chief of staff said he was going to see to it that I'm recommended for the D. S. C., so I thought—"

"For what, avic? Gettin' the tail av you wet?"

"For tunnelin' those four Germans on the submarine we bumped into?"

"What Germans? I saw no Germans tunneled."

"You would have, if you'd looked around that night. You bore off to the right but I went straight for that sub. The enemy were out on her deck—I had my pistol—and I tunneled them."

"Ye everlashtin' numskull. Why didn't I hear av this before?"

"You didn't ask me—and if I'd told you about it you'd have thought I was a liar and a braggart."

"Ye'll never get the D. S. C. unless an officer witnessed the act."

"The chief of staff says the major saw it from where he was floating around on a life-raft. He says there was a piece about it in the Paris editions of the English papers."

"So our dear major is alive, is he? Well, thank God for that. Hum! Well, I'm not denyin' ye did a worthy job, Ernie, lad—an' the service loves a modest man . . . and far be it from me to shtand in the way av me bunkie gettin' a D. S. C. I have the medal of honor meself—so we'll be a pair to dhraw to. At least 'twill win us favorable considheration whin our application for a thransfer comes up."

"We'll have to report to Remount now, of course."

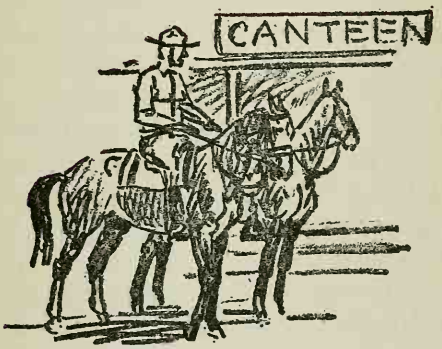
"God help us, we will, since ye promised. But the Professor never took the oath av enlistmint an' the identity av Tip is unrevealed, so, since he's officially dead, begorra Tip's ghost will go back to the field artillery where it belongs. An' the Professor will go wit' him." Rogan scratched his ingenious head. "'Tis well to have a friend in a chief av shtaff," he added. "Sure, nobody but a complete jackass would think av wastin' two fightin' min in Remount. Whin do we shtart?"

"Tomorrow morning, Pat."

"Thin," said Private Patrick Rogan, No. 87-243, "bad cess to the day I ever became a married man, for tomorrow mornin' me ould heart will break in two halves, so it will." He looked at his buddy with a

great pain in his eyes. "Why in the name av common sinse couldn't I have remained an indacent civilian?" he wailed.

"Search me, Pat," said Ern Givens.



CHAPTER XXV

ROGAN was quite fit to travel the morning we left Neuilly. From the moment the doctor had permitted him a normal diet, Laurette had poured good French rations into him, with the result that he gained two pounds a day. Also he had started his vigorous morning setting-up exercises as soon as he was strong enough to do so; consequently when he took the road that morning Rogan was quite strong enough for active service, although singularly weak when it came to the parting with Laurette.

Ern saddled Tip and me, made up the bedding-rolls and led us out to the narrow street in front of Laurette's house. Presently Rogan came out, strode swiftly to Tip, mounted and turned his head down the street.

"He's been weeping," Tip whispered to me as Ern Givens and I rode up alongside him and Rogan. "I can feel him shake a trifle in the saddle."

At the edge of the town the civil population was gathered to see us off. There were hearty cries of *"En avant, soldats! En avant, mes braves! Bon voyage! Bonne chance!"* Everybody shook hands and one of the old women, who had lost her man in the war, wept over Rogan.

The curé was there with six bottles of his best wine for our journey, and the mayor was there, too, in his

Prince Albert coat and ten-o'clock-mass hat. He delivered a farewell speech. Then Ern managed, in broken French, to thank them all for their hospitality and friendliness. (Rogan could not have spoken a word if his life had depended on it.) Next Ern made me bow low to our friends, while Tip, who had no tricks for social occasions, hee-hawed his farewell; and we turned tail on Neuilly and stepped out at a brisk trot down the fine, hard, poplar-lined turnpike that led into the south.

The best sort of friend is one with sufficient sense to keep his mouth shut at the right time. All morning we walked and trotted, but never a word passed between Rogan and Ern. Jeff scampered along with us, now in front, now behind, now making wide casts out into the fields, occasionally delaying us by roading a covey of red-beaked partridge to a point.

Jeff, like his master, was well trained and well disciplined; once he got on a point he'd stand there frozen as long as the birds lay close, so Ern would have to gallop me up to the little dog, flush the birds and force Jeff to come back into the road. Occasionally French dogs dashed out from farms to attack him, but on such occasions Jeff, who disliked fighting, would run in between Tip and me and march there. He knew we'd protect him with our agile hoofs.

Rogan was much depressed. However, you can always win a bet on the Irish by playing one angle of their character. They will not remain depressed more than a few hours.

(O'Malley interrupted my tale. "If they did, Prof, they'd go crazy. 'Tis that swift mental rebound from

depression an' sadness that makes suicide a rare thing among our people.")

I agree with you, O'Malley (I continued). Presently Rogan shook himself in the saddle and edged Tip over close to me until he and Ern were riding boot to boot. "Poor darlint," he said simply, "she took it hard."

Ern reached over and slapped his buddy on the back. *"C'est la guerre,"* he said, which means, "It is the war."

"An' what a silly line that is!" Rogan replied, brightening visibly. "Sure, wit'out that *'C'est la guerre'* the French would go to the divil entirely. A fox runs off wit' a fat goose. *C'est la guerre.* Tip casts a shoe, mayhap. *C'est la guerre.* The soup biles over. *C'est la guerre.* The baby has colic. *C'est la guerre."*

He leaned down, with the ease of the accomplished horseman, picked Jeff up by the scruff of the neck, and held him before him. "Let me catch you, ye little nuisance, delayin' the march ag'in wit' yer free-lance huntin' an' I'll put ye on a leash," he scolded. "How dare ye tantalize me? 'Tis well ye know me shotgun that was the pride av me life wint down wit' that thransport."

Jeff, who knew just as well as Ern Givens did, that Rogan was coming up for air, licked his master's hands and wriggled with delight. And presently Rogan began to sing:

> "Kathleen Mavourneen, the gray dawn is breakin',
> The horn av the hunter is hearrd on the hill."

"Cut that out," Ern Givens commanded. "I know what you're leading up to, you mournful Mick. There's a line in that song that says:

'Oh, it may be for years and it may be forever.'

You mustn't get the notion in your fool head that Laurette's as good as a widow right now."

"I have a presint'ment," Rogan retorted, but none the less cheerfully. "Sure it just isn't in the cards that a man who's dodged as much metal as I have should survive this war. There's such a thing as timptin' Fate too far. However, divil a hair will I care, wanst I've put in for me war-risk insurance an' made me will. The tin t'ousand will make a nice nest-egg for me wife, an' in back av that ag'in I have twinty t'ousand dollars in securities."

"Where'd you get all that money—soldiering?"

"A few simple rules in poker, me son, such as never dhrawin' to a bob-tailed flush or a split flush an' never bettin' thim until I have thim. On occasion I've backed me judgment av men an' horses wit' a fair bet on a polo game, an' for two years whilst stationed at the Presidio av San Francisco I managed a grand little light-weight that rode swing on No. 3 gun. I developed the bhoy an' fought him in the serrvice an' out av it. Me wants have been simple an' I've saved a bit from every pay-day. I have eight fogies. I'm a masther gunner an' an experrt pistol shot an' I dhraw me exthra pay for that. Whinever I had the price av a share av shtock I invested it wit' me ould friend, Jawn D. Rockefeller, for says I to meself, says I, if Jawn can make it for himself in ile, faith, he can

make it for me. An' I'll say this for him. He's not disapp'inted me."

"You're the only thrifty soldier I've ever met," Ern declared.

"Ah, but 'twas different wit' me. Sogerin' is me profession an' 'twas never in me mind to be retired at the ind av me serrvice whilst shtill a young man an' me wit' nothin' but me retired pay, though that same'll be a nice bit. Three days before I'm retired the top sergeant will shtep down an' I'll take on the diamond, so's I can retire as a top an' thereafther draw the pay av the rank at which I rethired. Sure the Ould Man will see to that. 'Tis the privilege of ould sogers like meself."

"Why, that will be a great fortune to Laurette, Pat."

" 'Twill be little enough should I become a father whilst the caissons are rollin' along."

Fell another silence, broken presently by Rogan. "Private Givens, have ye a tongue in yer head?"

"Of course, fool."

"Thin use it. Must we mope through this fine counthry like a pair av nuns bound be a vow av silence? What do ye think av the chicken business for me afther I've retired?"

"Oh! So you do not intend to get killed in action, after all?"

"Faith, I do not. 'Tis in me mind that I cannot afford it now, what wit' me married an' all."

Ern threw back his head and laughed long and loud, and with that laugh the last blue devil fled Rogan's mercurial soul, and thereafter they chatted and laughed as men do who haven't a care in the world.

Throughout that march we avoided the villages, for as Rogan said, one could never tell when we might bump into one occupied by our troops and it was just as well to avoid quizzing by the M. P.'s. Moreover, it was handier for us to stop at farm-houses. Every French home, I discovered, is a potential inn, and in private homes Rogan and Ern could always get a good meal and a good bed for half what it would have cost them in a hotel. Then, too, there were always quarters and forage for Tip and me, and a bowl of soup and some nice scraps for Jeff.

Tip was a slow walker and a hard trotter, so our gallant masters did not crowd us on that march. The longest march we made was forty kilometers and our average march was thirty. As Rogan remarked, there was no provost guard out after us, so why should we hurry?

We had been on the road a week before meeting with any American troops, although we passed through a country where British troops were billeted and in training. Also, we met many convalescent French soldiers and numerous Moroccans and Senegalese. Once we spent the night with a regiment of British artillery, and as this outfit was having a little private horse show next day we lay over to see it.

The colonel of that regiment was a fine sporty gentleman and when he heard how we four had landed in France, he said: "What! What! Perfectly ripping, by Jove! Gallant fellows, what? Wish I had you." Then he had his mess steward bring Ern and Rogan each a quart of champagne and a good cigar and Rogan stood up very respectfully and said:

"I never thought I'd see the day I'd say it, sir, but we're all in the same fight together now, so here goes, sir. God save the king!"

"Damned Irish rebel!" said the colonel, and enjoyed the joke hugely. In our country it's the fashion to think the English haven't much of a sense of humor, but that's all in my eye. My personal observation was that they're a little bit hard to get acquainted with, however. They do not fall into the arms of the first man that speaks pleasantly to them. No, indeed. They wait and watch a while to make certain he's as good as he appears to be, and if they conclude he is, they'll probably indicate it by calling him "Old Fruit" or "Old Bean" and inviting him to their homes. They do not talk a great deal and can say more in fewer words than any people I have ever met. I have a notion they dislike us because we have no reserve and talk too much and too freely. Ern Givens would probably have made a hit with them on that score if we'd stayed very long, but as matters turned out, he made a hit anyhow.

Rogan was responsible. When the British colonel heard Rogan had arrived on a United States Army mule he said: "What, what! A Yankee mule, egad! Then we can have international competition in our mule class showing tomorrow. Why not rest a day and enter your bally mount?"

"There'll be no international competition, I'm thinkin', sir," Rogan grinned, "for I've a notion the United States has furnished the mules for yer regiment, sir. But since competition is the life av thrade, I'll enter Tip an' much obliged to the colonel."

"How about your mount, Private Givens?" says the colonel. "Eh, what?"

"I'd be delighted to enter him in the officers' charger class, sir. He's my battery commander's mount."

"Right-o. Quite so. That's the spirit, my man. Unfortunately our rules prescribe that an officer must ride him."

"Perhaps the colonel will honor my battery commander by riding his mount," Ern suggested.

The colonel—I don't think he was a day over thirty—thought that was sporting of Ern, and when an Englishman thinks a thing is sporting ten men and a boy can't keep him from trying it on.

("They're horsemen—and horse lovers. I'll say that for them," O'Malley admitted. "Whilst my people have had small use for thim as a nation I'm bound to admit that individually we get along rather well together. An' now, whin at long lasht, they've come to the conclusion we're a nuisance to the king an' 'tis betther for all concerned to let us run our little island in our own way, I'm thinkin' we'll forget the ould grudge an' get along together as thick as three in a bed.")

I hope so (I added). Well, that regiment of eighteen-pounders was a snappy outfit. Rogan inspected it and said so, and I am only repeating what he said. The men were clean and prideful; they took the best of care of their horses and material, their discipline was perfect and they knew their business. They weren't quite as well fed as our troops, however, and, of course, their pay was a mere trifle compared with ours or their own colonial troops.

Well, Rogan borrowed a pair of clippers from a battery farrier and roached Tip's mane, which was a bit scraggy by now. Then he slicked up Tip's tail and braided some ribbons in it, polished Tip's hoofs and groomed him until he shone like a dollar in a sweep's hand. Tip was in the pink of condition and of course when a healthy mule is in the pink of condition and has been groomed religiously, he's the slickest animal that walks.

On his part, Ern combed out my mane and tail and foretop and washed them in warm soap-suds. Then he got a quart of peroxide of hydrogen from the village chemist and washed them in that. Next he and Rogan polished my hoofs, washed off my legs and groomed me and rubbed me down with salt sacks (generously donated by our competitors) until I thought they'd never get through. While they were at luncheon a British Tommy stood guard on us to see that we didn't roll on the picket-line, and after luncheon the horse show was held.

Rogan led Tip around the ring, and I verily believe that had it not been for the old scars and white patches that marred Tip's beauty he would have won over the sorrel mule that was the pride of that regiment. I must admit, however, that the sorrel mule was hard to beat, so eventually he got the blue ribbon and Tip had to be content with the red.

I appeared in the ring wearing the colonel's equipment—a fine pigskin field-saddle and the regulation bridle. No polished metal or pipe-clayed martingale, etc. Just service equipment. But believe you me, O'Malley, it was clean and soft from good saddle

soap and polished well, while as for the colonel himself, he appeared in a snappy new uniform and looked sweet enough to kiss.

I knew he was a rider, however, the minute he forked me. He had fine hands. Ern had told the colonel the signals to give me to make me do my tricks and break instantly into trot, canter and gallop. I'm three-gaited, O'Malley. There's no blood of pacers in my ancestry; in fact, I never could abide the doodle-bug action of the American-bred saddle-horse, with his five gaits and his air of high-hatting every other horse in the ring. All show—fine for fat old gentlemen to ride, but when it comes to service they run in the end book.

Well, I saw that for the honor of our service I had to do my stuff, and maybe you don't think I did it. I suppose, being an American, I can't help bragging a little, but I must have had something to brag about that day, for as we circled the ring with my long springy walk, head up, eyes to the front, ears pricked forward and tail arched, the regiment cheered. I have good, straight, wide action in front and rear; I pick my feet off the ground in such a way that any man who knows horses realizes instantly that I am sure-footed. I have a fast, springy trot and my training as a cow-horse had developed a nifty little canter and such reining as no horse in the British Army, unless, indeed, he might be a well-trained polo mount, could hope to excel. In the gallop I had speed; I cut circles and figure eights, quick starts and quick stops, pulled up on my haunches. And when they put up the five-foot hurdles I was the only horse that went over without touching a hoof.

However, I did not win the blue ribbon, because Ern Givens refused to permit me to compete, although the regiment was quite willing that I should. Ern announced that he was entering me merely for exhibition and the joy of nations, so the horse-show committee awarded me a special prize. You'd never guess what it was.

("A sack of carrots," Taffy, the Welsh pony, suggested.

("An engrossed certificate," O'Malley hazarded.)

You're both short of the target. The prize was a quart of Otard Dupuy French brandy, 1854. Ern received the prize from the committee and made a speech, in which he said he was glad to win the prize and would preserve it, in case of snake-bite.

Then he said he would be happy to entertain the regiment with an exhibition of Western American ranch sports. So he mounted me and we raced around the ring, with Ern running along my off side, vaulting over me to my near side and back, crawling around under my neck, riding me with his face to my tail, mounting me from the rear with a running jump, and riding me standing in the saddle. They drove in a lively two-year-old French steer, and we got Monsieur Steer into a gallop. Then I cantered up alongside him and Ern dived off me, lit on that steer's neck and bulldogged him good and proper.

Ern said he regretted he did not have his riata and a stock-saddle so he could rope some goats for them; but he had secured a nice half-inch cotton rope, with which he showed them a lot of fancy roping stunts. Rogan mounted me, and we tried to race past Ern, but

he put his twine over us every time, and ended up by roping Rogan around the saddle and dragging him off me and right up to him.

That British colonel declared we had been the life of the party, and expressed to us the thanks of his regiment, whereupon all the men cried, "Hear! Hear!" When an Englishman approves very heartily of a speech or a part of a speech he always says, "Hear! Hear!"

After the horse show we had a field-day, and Rogan fought three two-minute rounds with the regimental champion, who made a monkey out of him. Then Ern Givens won a rough-and-tumble wrestling match, and just before the day ended he borrowed two Webley pistols and gave an exhibition of two-handed pistol shooting that would have given old Kaiser Bill heart failure if he had been there to see it. Ern riddled tennis-balls as fast as somebody could throw them up in the air; he hit a two-franc piece the colonel tossed up and rolled a tin can along the ground for twenty yards, hitting it twelve times in six or seven seconds.

After the show the regimental sergeant-major took charge of Rogan and Ern, and with half a dozen old non-coms they all went into an adjacent village and had a wonderful dinner at the colonel's expense. I have a shrewd suspicion that they all got very tight, because Tip and I heard them coming home in the early morning hours, and all hands were singing a scandalous song set to the tune of "Greenland's Icy Mountains."

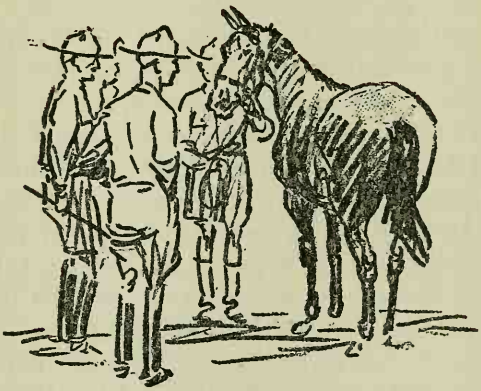
About ten o'clock the following morning Ern and Rogan showed up, saddled us and pulled out. We

received a good British cheer as we departed, and as we passed the colonel's billet he sang out to Ern:

"I say, Yank. You haven't forgotten the prize your horse won, I hope?"

Ern saluted him. "We killed that last night, sir, organizing a chapter of the English-speaking Union."

"Come again," said the colonel. "Good luck!"



CHAPTER XXVI

IN my day I marched many a weary kilometer in France, but that march to the south of France was the only joyous one I had. Rogan had a theory that any soldier on active service should do himself well, as our British friends say, so we lived on the fat of the land. When we found a nice green field late in the afternoon, Ern (he was the treasurer of the expedition) would give the owner two francs, and we'd be turned loose to graze for a couple of hours. Occasionally we had a fine feed of fresh crisp beet-tops or cabbage-stalks; our grain rations alternated with corn, oats and barley; the hay was always good and sweet and free from noxious weeds, and we drank from clear running streams.

The old men and girls at the farms where we lodged nights always threw a fine big feed together for Ern and Rogan, and only when it was impossible to get it did they fail to have champagne for dinner. Always after dinner, when Rogan would come out to the barn to give Tip and me the once-over before turning in, we could hear him sigh with contentment and high living.

The eighth day on the road we ran into a United States Infantry platoon, and a fresh second lieutenant stopped us and looked severe and made us show our credentials. He wanted to know if Ern and Rogan

were a pair of Pershing's wanderers and declared he believed our travel order had been forged. Rogan looked him over coolly and said:

"Faith, if Gineral Pershing knew the lootinint was in France, 'tis not dhrillin' a platoon the lootinint would be, but in complete charge av the war."

"None of your impertinence, my man," says the shave-tail.

Now, Rogan and Ern had lunched pretty well and Rogan had a couple of noggins of very old rum under his belt. So he felt very independent. "Arrah, go home an' tell yer mother to wipe yer nose," he growled. "Ye pin-feather bhoy, intherferin' in the business av grown men! Sure, if Gineral Hunther Liggitt heard ye referrin' to me as 'me man' he'd die wit' a fit av laughin'. Faith, I must tell him av you the firrst time I call to pay him me respectful djooty."

"I've a notion to put you in arrest," piped the lieutenant.

"I wear the medal av honor, young fella, m'lad," Rogan retorted, and indicated the pale blue ribbon with the tiny white stars. "If ye had any manners ye'd take off yer cap to me. An' be the same token the lootinint did *not* return me salute—an' God knows I was taught to salute wit' a snap! Have a care would ye get fresh an' put Private Patrick Aloysius Rogan, M. H., in clink. A major did that wanst, an' faith, the very next day the colonel paraded the regimint in hollow square an' in the middle av that square me brave major come up to me, saluted, removed his cap, shtood uncovered a few seconds an' apologized to me. An' his offinse was noted on his milith'ry record."

The shave-tail flushed, paled and fidgeted. "I beg your pardon, Private Rogan," he said. "I failed to notice your ribbon." And he saluted and uncovered.

"I'll admonish ye this time, but have a care would this happen again, me lad," growled Rogan, and we rode off leaving that boy shave-tail staring after us.

"Is that true about the regiment parading in hollow square and the major apologizing to you?" Ern queried, very much awed.

"Ye great ba-boon! Av coorse not. But does that ninety-day wonder know any different? It come into me mind to impress him, that's all. Ochone! What wit' this wild free life we're leadin', Ernie, me lad, all me time-honored respect for an officer, an' all me discipline, has gone to hell entirely." And he roared with laughter—the old Irish devil.

"Is General Hunter Liggett a friend of yours?"

"Divil a word o' lie in that. I've borrowed money from him. An' 'twas the thought av that good, kind, fatherly ould soger an' him as simple an' comfortable as an ould shoe—makin' good sogers out av bad recruits be the weight av affection rather than the guard-house—that aroused me ire agin that pup av a bhoy. Ah, wirra, wirra, 'tis only the great that are simple—'tis only thim that have learrned to obey that can bear the weight av authority wit' dignity. Sure the army's gone to hell entirely an' I'm gettin' to be as bad as the next."

That was the day we made the forty-kilometer march. For three days Ern and Rogan hadn't had an opportunity to bathe. Every time we came to a river there were women scattered along the banks

washing, and as Ern and Rogan didn't have any bathing-suits they had to ride on. There are no bathtubs in French farm-houses, either, and consequently Rogan was gummy and irritable, and swore that a hot bath in a bathtub he must have that night, else he'd run amuck and kill a squad of second lootinants. Ern wanted tubbing too, although bathing with him wasn't a matter of such importance as to Rogan, who had been taught that cleanliness is next to godliness. Out on the range cowboys have to go without a bath for considerable periods, and learn to get along with a bucket of water and a towel.

We were coming to a big town called Angoulême that night, and according to the motor guide-book in Ern's saddle-bag, there was a real hotel there. Consequently, Rogan had made up his mind to favor that hotel with their patronage, which was why we pushed on again after dinner at a farm. The moon was at the full about seven o'clock and shone with a mellow radiance over that silent peaceful countryside, so we were able to pick our way nicely along the road, which paralleled the railroad track.

And now, from time to time, we began passing troop trains, north-bound. In the open doors of the box cars we could see American soldiers standing, and these waved to us as they rolled by.

"Poor divils," Rogan sighed. "They're bound for the front. Well, a lot av *them* will not come back!"

These troop trains came along at half-hour intervals. Three of them were loaded with infantry, but presently a long train of mixed box cars and flats came rolling by.

Rogan pulled Tip up. "Artillery, begorra!" he cried joyfully. "Nice new seventy-fives, all painted an' camouflaged, an' the animals loaded on flats. Oh, ye lucky, lucky men! Rollin' north to the job that awaits ye, an' mayhap, this time tomorrow, ye'll be in the firin' position—hey, soger! What outfit are ye?"

"First battalion, ——th Field Artillery, U.S.A., you poor unfortunate S. O. S.," some soldier yelled back. "Gangway for combat troops!"

The S. O. S., O'Malley, (I explained) means Service of Supply. It is an honorable service, of course, but there's no fighting in it, and men with combative souls always shuddered at the thought of being transferred to the S. O. S. Indeed, combat troops elected to regard the S. O. S. with good-natured pity and always spoofed them. Rogan trembled with rage now, as the words of a hated—and not very respectable—song floated back to us from that moving troop train:

> "Oh, mother take in your service flag,
> Your boy's in the S. O. S."

"The blackguards! An' our own ould regiment at that! Oh, bad luck to me that would waste time gettin' married an' fraternizin' wit' those horse-lovin', dhrink-lovin', abandoned Tommy Atkinses the betther part av two days, whilst our regimint finished its trainin' at De Souge an' shtarted for the front." He wrung his hands and moaned. With a little encouragement he would have wept. "We're lost, Ernie," he cried. "We'll never find home ag'in, they'll keep us in Remount an' may God have merrcy on our souls. Oh, wirra, wirra, wirra!"

"Stop your wirra-wirraing," Ern Givens commanded. "That man said they were the first battalion of the old regiment. That means Batteries A, B and C. The second battalion will be D, E and F. We belong in F. That is, we hope we do! F should be along in the next train. Hell's fire, man, we'll flag that rattler and climb aboard. There's a green switch light half a mile down the track, so there must be a side-track there. We'll throw the switch, run her in on the side-track and—come on, buddy. We haven't any time to pick flowers." And he touched me on the flanks in a way that meant, "Fly at it."

I flew. Indeed, we had no time to spare and I gave Ern Givens all I had, while old Tip and Rogan came lumbering far behind, for Tip couldn't run for sour apples. Sure enough we found a switch and a side-track and half a mile down the track we could see another switch light. That was the one we had to reach and throw, so away we went once more.

As we came barging up off the road out onto the maze of tracks, a Frenchman came running out of a little shack, waving a red lantern at us and yelling something we couldn't understand and weren't interested in. Ern jumped down and examined the switch. It was locked, so he turned and asked the Frog for the key—that is, he made frantic signs. But the Frog shook his head and yelled, *"Non, non. Défendu!"*

"Non, non, vous grand'mère. Pas défendu," yelled Ern. *"Donnez-moi* the key before I take you apart to see what makes you go." And he made a rush at the Frog.

Now the Frog was about fifty years old, but he was no tadpole in the matter of size and he did carry a

club that looked as if it had once been part of a pick-handle. He swung it at Ern, who dodged under it and closed with the old fellow. Flop! Down he went, with Ern's strong fingers roving over him in search of the keys. He found them—quite a bunch of them—and then sat on the Frog until Rogan came rolling up on Tip, who was badly blown and dripping with sweat.

"Take these keys and find the one that unlocks the switch, *Patricio mío,*" Ern ordered. And while the old Frog screamed and frothed at the mouth and struggled, Rogan found the key, opened the switch and threw it. Then Ern let the old Frog up and gave him ten francs.

"Merci, Monsieur Américain," said the old Frog. *"Pardonnez-moi."* And he made a grab for the grand old rag of the French Republic.

"Pleased to meet you," says Ern, grinning, and hitting the old Frog a friendly slap on the back. He took the red lantern and waited until the headlights of a locomotive appeared far down the track, when he swung it gently in the signal which, in the United States, means: "Slowly. Don't take the switch too fast." I imagine it means the same thing in France, for the train slowed up, rolled gently in on the spur-track and came to a halt.

An excited conversation immediately ensued between the old Frog and the French engineer. Indeed, only once again was I ever to hear such a babble of voices, and that was the night Private Pert Havers got drunk and fell in a French well and it took the section an hour to get the fool out.

The riot was quelled when an officer climbed out

of a second-class carriage and walked up toward the locomotive. He had a French officer with him—the battalion liaison officer.

"Whose cow have we hit now?" says the American.

"Major Caldwell, sir!" Rogan's voice roared into the night. "Major, darlin', is it yerself?"

"It is. Who are you?"

"Stable Sergeant Rogan, sir. F Battery. Ochone, Major dear. I've been lost for months. I'm a wandherer wit'out home or counthry or pay or serrvice record or hope av salvation."

He made a run for the major.

"Rogan! You poor old lost atom! By God, I'm glad to see you." And Major Caldwell shook old Rogan's hand and almost hugged him. I imagine he would have hugged him if he hadn't been a regular. "What under the canopy are you doing here?"

Rogan commenced to weep. "I want to come home," he blubbered. "We saw the firrst battalion goin' by—an' we knew the second would soon be along—an' Givens—late private av F Batth'ry, sir—threw the Frog an' got his keys—an' whilst Givens held the animal I threw the switch—an' shtopped ye. Oh, my God, Major darlin', don't tell us we can't come wit' ye. 'Twill kill us entirely."

A few cars down a voice yelled, "Am I crazy, or is that Pat Rogan?"

"Ye're not crazy, Captain Burwell, an' I'm Pat Rogan—an' half crazy wit' fear an' happiness. Ochone, Captain Sam, sir—our own dear batth'ry commandher—"

"Why, you damned old vagabond, Rogan. And

Jeff! Hello, little pup." Jeff had run to greet Captain Burwell and leaped into his arms; the next minute Rogan had them both in *his* arms, for the poor devil was so beside himself with joy he forgot for a moment that he was an enlisted man. All he knew was that here was the old outfit again; here were the officers that knew him and loved him and had confidence in him—the men who understood him and appreciated him and hadn't the least hesitance in admitting that, while other soldiers were expendable, Rogan was not!

The tears were streaming down old Rogan's leathery face and he was unashamed. "Givens is wit' me, sir," he blubbered. "An' ould Tip, an' the Professor."

"I don't believe you."

"Come an' see for yourself, sir. Hey, Ernie, lad. Come here an' report for djooty to the batth'ry commandher."

So Ern came walking to meet them and I followed. Sam Burwell stood and stared at us in the light of the red lantern and murmured in an awed voice that he'd be double-damned and then some.

"We have no time for a celebration," the major cut in briskly. "Take our word for it, you two men, that you're welcome. This troop train has to keep moving, however, or we'll be having a rear-end collision with the third battalion train following. What's the big idea? How did you two get here?"

Ern told him without any loss of words, but craftily refrained from telling him of our meeting with the division commander.

"Shades of Julius Cæsar and General Jackson!" said Major Caldwell. "You're officially dead. You're both

excess! Tip's excess, too—and we can use him. And Captain Burwell's mount is here. Of course we'll take you—and ask questions afterward. Burwell, have your men let down a ramp and get these animals aboard, so we can pull out of here. Rogan—and you, Givens, go back to F Battery's cars and turn in. There's good hunting ahead and we're in a hurry to get there. Hurrah for hell!"

"God bless the Major, for a thrue red-leg. He has speed an' accuracy, instantaneous decision an' the power av initiative," old Rogan roared. "Come here to me, Jeff, ye little snifflin' nuisance. Fall in, Ernie, me lad. Thank God, we're home ag'in!"

As they went down the track, with Tip and me trotting after them, they sang:

"Oh, we're going to the Hamburg show,
To see the elephant and the wild kangaroo;
We'll all hang together,
In fair and stormy weather,
For we're goin' to see the whole show through!"

Some men threw a ramp over the side of a flat, and old Tip ran up the cleated runway and took his place between two big Norman wheelers.

"Lay over, rooks," he brayed, "and make way for an old soldier." He lashed out with his heels and bared his long teeth, and the gentle Normans shrunk from him; seeing which I ran up the ramp and squeezed in beside him. The section of stake-fence was slipped back into the sockets again, and the train commenced to move. Slowly it rumbled over the side-track, and as the old Frog threw the switch at the far end and yelled, *"Vive l'Amérique,"* we rolled out on the main line bound for the fields of glory.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE rapid march of events within the past half-hour had left us amazed and a bit bewildered. Old Tip, however, was as cool as a cucumber. His career had been one long processional of surprises and change; mentally and physically that ancient warrior was always set for anything that might happen. We had scarcely started when he looked around at the two grade Normans and nodded affably.

"My name's Tip," he announced, "and my buddy here is called the Professor. We served in this outfit back in the U. S. A. Where do you two hail from?"

"Iowa," said the Norman nearest Tip. "My name is Bingo. My pal, also from Iowa, is called Banjo. We're wheelers on No. 1 gun."

"I knew you were wheelers the instant I looked at you. Prof here is the battery commander's mount and I'm—well, I'm excess. For the first time in almost a quarter of a century of continuous service I'm A. W. O. L. from my service record. I really belong in pack artillery—mountain howitzers, you know, so I suppose I'll be assigned to the water-cart or the chow-gun in this outfit. Well, there are more dishonorable assignments. Many a time I've heard more cheers for the arrival of food and water than for gallantry in action. Have you boys any idea where we're headed?"

"It's a secret. Everything in this man's army is a secret."

"Well, it's no secret that I'm wringing wet with sweat and if Patrick Aloysius Rogan forgets to come aft here and blanket me I'll have congestion of the lungs by morning. This train raises a bit of breeze. Ah, here comes Rogan. I knew he wouldn't forget me."

"And here comes Ern Givens, too, Tip."

They unsaddled us, hove the old rattletrap French saddles and bridles overboard, rubbed us down and blanketed us. Then they made their way forward to the car ahead. This flat was loaded with a Doherty wagon, a gun and a caisson; and the pair crawled into the Doherty wagon, from which protesting curses immediately emanated. I recognized one of the protesting voices. It was that of Pert Havers.

"Clear out av this, Havers," Rogan ordered. "I'm stable sergeant av this outfit ag'in, an' Givens is a corporal. Rank has its privileges. Ye scallywag! Well I knew somebody would have a nice bed av hay on the floor av this wagon."

"I don't see no chevrons on you," Havers protested.

"Ye'll talk back to a non-commissioned officer, will ye," Rogan roared. "Clear out av this or I'll prefer charges agin ye."

There was no resisting Rogan when he gave a command. The long years of service as a non-com had given his voice a quality that aroused in those he addressed an instinctive impulse to obey. Pert Havers growled, but he got out of that wagon, and his pal went with him. This other man was Chick Baudry, a small-town prize-fighter. Both men crawled under the Doherty wagon and curled up there in their

blankets, while the audacious Rogan and Ern made themselves comfortable in as nice a nest as even a cat could wish. Jeff jumped in with them.

"Can you beat that scoundrel, Rogan?" Tip wanted to know. "He just bluffs his way through everything However, he'll have to fight Chick Baudry in the morning, when Chick discovers Rogan is not a non-com."

"Do you supposes Rogan realizes that, Tip?"

"Certainly. But Rogan never worries today about what he will have to do tomorrow."

All that night we rolled into the north. About daylight we pulled in on a spur-track, the ramps were let down and the stock was led off, watered and fed. About noon we loaded again and resumed our journey. Our progress was slow, for we had to wait on sidetracks for the regular trains to pass. Also there were a number of train-loads of wounded coming down from the front. Indeed, long before the first of these train-loads of wounded passed us Tip called the turn.

"I smell blood," he confided, "blood and drugs. They're evacuating the wounded. Well, praise be for that. It's proof the war isn't over and that there's still work for us."

The odor of those trains made many of the animals nervous. I did not like it myself, but Tip paid no attention to it.

While we were were munching our rations the batteries had breakfast. The cooks fired up in the open, made coffee and heated some canned beans. There was an ample ration of good white bread and conserve in

each outfit, and the men did justice to it, the officers eating with them.

When Captain Burwell came up to the fire to get his breakfast Chick Baudry stepped up to him and begged for an interview.

"Very well, Baudry," said Sam Burwell. "What's on your mind?"

"Are Rogan and Givens non-coms, sir?" Baudry asked.

"Not in this outfit—as yet, but I imagine they will be as soon as I can arrange it. Why do you ask?"

"They threw Havers an' me out of our sleepin' quarters last night, sir. Said they were non-coms."

"Serves you right for going. What do you intend doing about it? Or do you want me to take the matter up for you?"

"Oh, I paddle my own canoe, sir," Baudry answered grinning.

"Well, good luck to you," Sam replied casually.

Baudry saluted, about-faced, walked right up to Rogan and said, "Put 'em up, Rogan. I'm goin' to take you apart."

Rogan clinched at once, wrestled Chick Baudry down and banged his head against the ground until he yelled for mercy. Meanwhile Ern Givens had walked over to Pert Havers.

"You fall to me, Pert," he announced. "How about you?"

But Pert Havers, for some reason, did not want to fight, so Ern grinned and the incident was closed. But from that moment forward every man in F Battery knew that whoever picked on Rogan would have to

answer to Ern Givens, and vice versa. And the battery felt no sympathy for Baudry and Havers. It was considered that Rogan and Ern had done something brilliant in running a blazer on them, and as neither Rogan nor Ern had attempted to evade the result of that blazer the battery chaffed Baudry and Havers unmercifully. These two were known to be more than ordinarily handy men with their fists and quick to challenge a comrade to battle as a result, but a rough-and-tumble fight was not to their liking, and it was the consensus of opinion that Rogan and Ern had put them in their places.

We rolled on toward the front all that afternoon and along toward sunset we could hear faintly the sound of distant explosions. After dark there was a rosy glow in the east and northeast, with intermittent flashes, and the sound of the explosions grew steadily louder.

"Well, this is certainly one big son of a gun of a war," Tip observed. "I imagine we'll soon be detraining. The traffic must be thick up that way."

He was right. About eight o'clock we detrained, and when the animals were fed the men bolted some cold rations and proceeded to unload the material. At midnight we harnessed and hitched in; then a French officer appeared to guide us and we pulled out and headed in the direction of the thunder and lightning to the northeast.

Ern put Captain Burwell's saddle and bridle on me. It was a Samur saddle, such as French officers use, and I found it extremely comfortable. The battery commander then mounted me, and Ern drove lead on No. 1 gun. Tip followed, tied to the water-cart.

There was considerable motor traffic on the road we traveled. Motor-trucks, heavily loaded, ground up to the front, and staff cars and motorcycle dispatch riders wound in and out among the trucks, feeling their way, for no lamps were permitted. However, in the dim star-shine they managed without a great deal of confusion. Our column kept well over to the right of the road, as good artillery always does on the march, and beyond an occasional curse from some driver when the fenders of a passing car scraped his leg, the outfit proceeded quietly and in good order.

About daylight we came into a village, where we parked and unhitched and after the animals had been tied on the picket-line under a long column of weeping willows that grew along a river bank, and the grooming and policing of equipment was finished, the outfit had breakfast.

This village had been pretty badly shot up. Tip explained to me that heavy artillery must have bombarded it for days. However, the men found holes in the ruins to crawl into and slept the day through, and not until dusk did they lead us down to the river to drink. We had no hay that night, but we did have a nose-bag filled with oats, and as Rogan slipped Tip's nose-bag on him he said:

"Eat hearty, Tip. God knows when you'll get your next square meal."

I gathered from the conversation that the men all felt gratified at being able to set up the picket-line under those weeping willows. German airplanes had circled the village twice during the day, and undoubtedly the horse lines would have been bombed had they

been in the open. Fortunately the drooping limbs of the weeping willows hid us from those searching eyes in the sky.

Few of the animals slept that night for the rumble of guns away off there on the sky-line and the roar of transport jolting through the village was deafening and disconcerting. Even Tip was wakeful, but out of curiosity rather than apprehension, I think. He appeared to enjoy the fireworks off there in front of us.

We remained in that village two days, and on the second day our forage trucks brought up some hay from the railhead. It certainly was welcome. About eight o'clock that same night we harnessed, hitched in and headed up the road again toward the fireworks.

And now, for the first time, we really struck traffic. I smelled blood and drugs almost continuously, so I imagined many of the cars that passed us were bearing wounded. Infantry, in single file, walked in the ditch by the side of the road, and occasionally, despite the utmost care, one of our carriages would drop into that ditch. Then there would be low orders and low cursing, and all hands would buckle to the wheels and slowly the carriage would come out again. Meanwhile those behind us would be demanding to know what the hell was the matter, and calling us boneheads. Military policemen were trying, unsuccessfully, to direct the traffic, but all they succeeded in doing was to identify themselves as M. P.'s, whereupon they got the raspberry. Far down the column a thin voice would pipe:

"Who win the war?"

And up in front a deep bass voice would answer: "The M. P.'s."

I felt sorry for those poor devils of M. P.'s. Nobody seemed to love them.

About three o'clock in the morning we turned off the main road into a quiet lane, down which we traveled for about a mile, then swung off into a field. Captain Burwell seemed to know exactly where he was—indeed, it developed later that he had been up there the day before to select his firing position—so we crept in and unlimbered without any fuss or feathers. As soon as the guns and caissons had been dropped Captain Burwell dismounted and turned me over to Dink Munro, the first sergeant, who then took command of the teams and the limbers; and we went back the way we had come just as dawn commenced to show in the east.

Dink led us down a road through a wood, and where the trees grew sparsely each team with its limber made its way into the wood where we unhitched, but did not remove the harness. One by one we were led to water at a well in the rear of a battered farm-house that abutted against the woods; then brought back, tied to the wheels and given about four quarts of oats each, in our nose-bags. The drivers crawled under the limbers and went to sleep and, save for the uproar up front, that wood was as quiet and peaceful as it is under these weeping willows.

CHAPTER XXVIII

DESPITE the fact that the woods in which the echelon was hidden were quite undisturbed, I found it a loathsome place to hide. It reeked of death and corruption, and while the battery horses did not appear to mind it, I, being a three-quarters thoroughbred and hence more sensitive than cold-blooded horses, became so nervous that I broke out into profuse perspiration. Old Tip's keen eye noted this when presently he and another mule named Harmony came jogging in with the reel cart, driven by Rogan.

"What are you all het up about, buddy?" Tip asked.

"This place stinks. I'm afraid of it, Tip."

"Well, if a little mild stink like this is going to make you afraid, my boy, my advice to you is to go over the hill right now."

"Mild? How you talk, Tip! It's horrible!"

"What you're smelling now," the old warrior assured me, "is sweeter than the spices of Araby or the flowers that bloom in the spring compared with that I've smelled in my day. You haven't seen anything or smelled anything yet."

"What makes this awful smell, Tip?"

"Cannon fodder, my boy, cannon fodder. Some dead men and horses in this wood—and nobody had time to bury them properly." He looked around him. "Bad place to park the echelon," he decided. "A woods

is one of the first places enemy artillery will shell. I'm surprised at such an exhibition of bad judgment on the part of Dink Munro. Where is Dink, anyhow?"

One of the Norman wheelers replied that Dink had ridden off down the valley, leaving Sergeant Haley, chief of the fifth section, in temporary command.

"He's scouting a better place than this to park the echelon," Tip declared. "I'll bet a sack of oats he's gone to find a wooded or brushy ravine close in under a steep hill. You remember how they picketed us under the weeping willow trees along the river in that last village we were in? That was to hide us from enemy air observers."

"Why a wooded ravine under a hill?" Harmony demanded.

"If there's any cover, we can hide there in comparative safety, but even if we are spotted and the enemy air observers attempt to direct enemy artillery fire on us, the hill will afford protection. Many of the shells will burst on the crest, and even if their angle of fall is figured accurately the majority of the shells will burst far up the slope or beyond us. I had an experience like that during the attack on San Juan Hill."

While we were talking Rogan was unhitching Tip and Harmony. His face darkened as he saw the drivers asleep under the limbers, the chief of the fifth section whom Dink Munro had left in charge lying with them. This sergeant Rogan presently dragged out roughly by the heels.

"Whin the cat's away the mice'll play, so they will," he thundered. "A fine example ye set for privates, is

it not? Here, we have the teams splatthered wit' yellow mud to the ears, whilst you, ye vagabone, curr1 up for a bit av a nap. Dhrivers! Fall in! Roll out of it before I kick ye out."

Nobody paused to inquire whether or not Rogan had got his chevrons back. They knew him of old, and because he assumed command and spoke in the voice of authority even the sergeant obeyed him. He stood the tired drivers in a row and lectured them.

"How often have I told ye that the chief asset av horse-dhrawn artillery or cavalry is its mobility? An' what is that mobility depindent on? On the condition av the horses, av coorse. How often have I told ye that no man in the mounted serrvice is wort' his salt until he has learrned to think firrst av his horse? These animals are tired. Groomin' an' clanin' an' rubbin' will rest them. Off wit' the saddles an' inspect backs an' bellies for galls an' scalds. Each driver will massage the back of his own mount.

"Out wit' the groomin' kits an' fly at it, an' see to it that not a speck av mud remains in the hair deep in undher the fetlocks. Let mud be left there an' t'will grind into the skin an' fester an' cripple the animals wit' what we call scratches. Examine the hooves an' clane them thoroughly. How do ye know but what a nail or a sharp fragment av shell picked up in the road may be worrkin' up into the frog? Don't wait till the poor dumb baste tells ye about it be goin' lame. Find it now. I'll warrant ye there's a bit of metal in the frog av Bingo's off front foot this minute. He's favorin' it a bit as he sthands."

He pulled out a tremendous pocket-knife, the joy

and pride of his existence. In addition to blades it carried a scissors, a corkscrew, a file and a tool for cleaning hoofs. Up came Bingo's big hairy leg. clasped between Rogan's sturdy knees, and the mud began to fly. In the crack of the frog Rogan found a long sliver of jagged steel, a fragment from a shell which had burst on the road we had traveled. He held it up. "Let this be a lesson to ye all," he growled. "Is there a canteen av bichloride solution in each limber chest, or have things gone to hell entirely whilst I've been gone?"

There was no bichloride solution, and the fifth section sergeant piped up and informed Rogan that the table of organization didn't call for it.

"The divil fly away wit' all lawyers," Rogan roared. "I, Patrick Aloysius Rogan, call for it. What's more, I'll have it before this day is done, bad cess to ye for as fine a lot of namby-pamby lazy-bones as I've ever seen. Fall to groomin'."

He had them remove the harness and saddles; when the grooming was done to his satisfaction he had our eyes and nostrils wiped out with damp sponges and made a personal examination for chafes, scalds, cuts and bruises. Then he went out on the main road and begged iodine from a medico in a passing ambulance; returning he doctored all animals requiring it.

"Now, thin, ye can all go back to shleep," he commanded, and forthwith turned his personal attention to his old friend Tip. And when Tip was all slicked up Rogan groomed and inspected me. Evidently he would not entrust our care to others. Faithful heart! Not until he had made us comfortable did he stretch

out on the ground to sleep. I marveled to Tip at the instantaneous manner in which he slipped off into unconsciousness.

"He's tired. The telephone detail got shot up first thing, Prof. Careless. Stood up against the sky-line and betrayed the B.C. position before it had even been established. A machine-gun nest opened on it, and three of the detail went down. Telephone corporal killed. So Rogan took command of the detail—and had to do most of the work, in addition to scouting for a new O. P. I heard Sam Burwell tell him he was a direct gift from God."

"Where is Ern Givens?" I queried anxiously.

"Carrying up ammunition to the guns the last I saw of him. I suppose, by this time, he's squattin' on his tail, wiping off the shells and inserting the fuses. I understand this is a quiet sector. We're attached to a French outfit and getting a little practical instruction. Nothing much doing. Both sides dug in and the artillery on each side doesn't fire except on clearly defined targets. Counter-battery work mostly, with a little interdiction fire on certain roads, plus the morning and evening hate. They shell this wood daily at four-fifteen, searching fire, in fifty-meter bounds."

"I hope they don't change their time schedule and start now, Tip."

"I hear they're very methodical. Sam Burwell's done a daring thing, and he and the French commander had a grand row over it right after the teams pulled out. He's gone into position just inside the edge of a strip of woods. The Frog pointed out to him that this is

in violation of all accepted artillery practice, because the edge of a strip of woods is always under suspicion and is shelled on general principles. But Sam said the Germans are wonderful soldiers and never forget that the enemy will act with discretion; hence Sam believes the Germans will feel certain that no battery commander will have so little sense as to go into position at the edge of a strip of woods—so they will not waste ammunition shelling a vacancy. They wouldn't go into position there themselves, so they will be constitutionally unable to imagine the enemy doing so. Just for that Sam decided to do it. The Frog told him he was crazy, but Sam replied that he knew that and would take a chance anyhow."

"How is he getting along?"

"Time will tell, Prof. I heard the skipper tell Rogan that from his observations the French and Germans are a very practical people. They like rules and regulations, and once they make a rule it hurts them to violate it. All the French he has met assure him the British are crazy because they do things their own way and change that way oftener than they change their shirts. They take advantage of the German habit of orderliness and time schedules for everything.

"Sam has been hobnobbing with some British artillery officers and learning things. He told Rogan he hadn't a great deal of confidence in the advice of the French, because it took a year for the French to get their infantry out of red breeches. Rogan said it took the British some little time to get their officers out of red coats in the Boer War, so he supposed it was a toss-up. Then he laughed and reminded the captain

that our own country was so smart it sent its first army to the Philippines dressed in heavy blue woolen uniforms, and that if we were going to get anywhere in this war we might as well be humble and learn from the experience of the other fellow."

Well, Tip and I chatted for half an hour on this and that, and finally I dropped asleep standing up. In the middle of the afternoon Dink Munro returned and announced he had found a nice place for the echelon about two miles back and off to the right. So he routed the gang out and somebody said:

"When do we eat?"

"When you get it, fool," Dink replied. "Harness and hitch."

When the teams were hooked to the limbers, and Tip and Harmony were hooked in to the reel cart, with Rogan on the seat, Dink pulled out of the wood with the No. 1 limbers and jogged straight across the country. No. 2 limbers followed five minutes later, with the remainder of the outfit following at five-minute intervals. Dink was too smart to put the outfit in column and make a good target for some watchful enemy plane.

We took every advantage of the ground and cover but for all that we were observed, for presently something came screaming over and dropped in a field off the left flank. It burst, and a column of dirt and black smoke rose from the explosion. I could hear things whistling through the air, and one piece rattled against the wheel of No. 3 gun limber, behind which I was being led. The leaders reared and plunged and tried to run away, but the drivers held them in hand

and talked to them. No. 1 and No. 2 sections, being far in front, were not being fired upon; evidently they had not been seen.

Four shells came down around us, but occasioned no damage, but as the last shell crashed Rogan yelled an order to gallop, and away we went, with the result that the next salvo came down well behind us. The German battery, with a sausage balloon observing the fire for them, was trying to bracket us—that is, when the first salvo was over us, they dropped back in their range and tried again. Rogan, being an old red-leg, knew they would do that, so he took us through as pretty a dodging game as one could wish for. They saw they couldn't get on us with shell, so with the third salvo they tried shrapnel.

Shrapnel, O'Malley, is bad medicine for man or beast, because each shell contains two hundred and fifty big, fat lead bullets which spatter down over quite an area. The first three bursts were in front, but we got the outer fringe of the fourth when it burst behind us. The wheel driver, Bingo and Banjo, the limber and I got it, but fortunately it was a very high burst, and the force of the bullets was fairly spent when they reached us. I got one on the right side of my neck, two on my rump and four that raked my sides.

What with the fright and pain I tried to leap over the limber and failed only because Bingo and Banjo each made a furious leap forward, thus jerking the limber away from me. Their driver, who bestrode Banjo, swayed in his saddle a few seconds and then started to slide off; in another instant he would have crashed to the ground and the wheel of the limber would

have passed over him, but the section chief spurred furiously alongside Banjo and scooped the driver up across the neck of the horse he was riding, at the same time giving the order:

"By the right flank! Gallop! Ho-o-o-o!"

We tore off into the field and escaped the next salvo entirely, then galloped back, by the left oblique, to the road. By this maneuver we missed the next salvo also, and before they could get on us again we had turned a bend in the road and were safe.

The fourth section remained in the woods for half an hour and then made a furious run for it. Before they were discovered the enemy had time for but one salvo, and this was wide of the mark. However, the appearance of the fourth section so unexpectedly must have convinced the enemy that the woods we had left still hid some teams, for half a dozen batteries opened on it and raked it mercilessly for half an hour.

Sure enough, Dink Munro had found a sheltered spot for us—a little orchard close under the lee of a hill. I heard him tell Rogan we were safe from everything there except bombs dropped from an airplane, and he hoped we hadn't been seen. It appeared that Sam Burwell had selected this spot for us the day before when he made his reconnaissance, and had taken two men of his battery detail with him to show them the place and direct them how to guide the echelon to it. In the darkness the markers had got lost, and when Dink couldn't find them at dawn he had decided to hole up in the woods temporarily.

"No more daylight parades for me," the little man

declared, as he inspected the casualties. The swing driver was not badly hurt. A shrapnel had struck him close to his spine, but his canteen strap had prevented its entrance. The blow had half stunned and sickened him for a few minutes, however, and it was evident that he would be on sick report for a week. Bingo and Banjo and I had holes in our hide—not deep enough to hurt us, but deep enough to make us bleed badly and stiffen us until they healed. Dink and Rogan doused our wounds with iodine and applied first-aid dressings, while Tip stood by and grinned at us.

"Got your little red badge of courage early in the game, didn't you, Prof?" he observed pleasantly. "Thank God for a high burst. A shrapnel properly timed to burst about fifteen feet over the target will kill a horse very readily. Well, you're entitled to seven wound stripes on your blanket."

I told Tip that was small comfort.

"Oh, I know you're sore as an infected tooth, Prof, but wait till tomorrow. You'll be stiff enough to cut up into ramrods. Remember, the veterinary will be over presently to sew you up and draw the edges of those ragged wounds together. Don't bite him or kick him, because he'll mean well by you."

Banjo and Bingo groused a lot about their hard luck, but eventually all three of us decided we had been pretty lucky and were able to be good-natured when Tip alluded to us as wounded heroes.

CHAPTER XXIX

EVIDENTLY enemy air observers could not detect our position, for the echelon remained in that spot for a month. The battery kitchen was set up in the yard of a farm-house close by, and at night Tip and Harmony dragged the chow-gun to the firing position so the men could have a good hot meal. About four o'clock in the morning they would drag the chow-gun up again and hurry back just as dawn broke in the east. They would leave a boiler of coffee at the firing position each morning, so the gun crews could heat it for luncheon over a large charcoal brazier, which gives forth no smoke. Smoke, you understand, might have betrayed the position to enemy observers.

The first-string gun crews would be on duty for twenty-four hours, then the second-string crews would relieve them and the first-string gun crews would hike back to the echelon for a rest and three big feeds. Of the animals in the echelon, Tip and Harmony were the only ones that did any work, and both complained bitterly that they were getting more than their fair share of the duty.

"It's because we're mules," Tip declared, "and mules have what a horse hasn't got—and that's horse sense. The top knows that if we slide off the road into a shell-hole we don't try to run away and scatter the chow all over France. I suppose we ought to feel

honored at the confidence reposed in us, but just between you and me, Prof, these horses ought to take their turn at the chow-gun. They need exercise. However, if this war ever becomes a war of movement they'll get it."

"Well, Rogan feeds us heavy at any rate," Harmony confessed. "When rations are scarce he never pinches down on us."

During that month the battery did not sustain any additional casualties, nor did it move from its position on the fringe of the woods. Sam Burwell had set up a dummy battery about five hundred meters out in front; that is, he had the battery put up a piece of careless camouflage that would cast shadows. When the enemy airplanes photographed the terrain, wheel-tracks to these shadows were faintly visible in the photographs—and the shadows were read as gun positions. As a result of this piece of deception the enemy shelled those shadows early and often, and while they worked away Sam Burwell and his detail did a lot of flash and sound ranging and eventually located the enemy batteries. And when the coordinates of their positions were definitely and accurately established, the entire regiment turned loose on them one night. As Tip remarked (he always brought us the gossip from the firing battery) the operation was a pronounced success but the patient died!

Meanwhile the case of Ern Givens and Rogan had been taken up by the colonel with G. H. Q., with the result that both men were assigned back to F Battery, and the battery clerk made out new service records for them. The day they came back officially, Ern

Givens was made a corporal, vice the telephone corporal who had been killed, and of course Rogan was made stable sergeant again. And no sooner had he been made stable sergeant than Dink Munro was detailed to an officers' training camp at Samur, and we never saw him again. He cried the night he left us, for he did not want to be an officer.

"The best I'll get is a commission as second lieutenant," he wailed to Rogan, "to be scolded by my captain whenever anything goes wrong with my platoon. I'll be shorn of my power and nobody will have any respect for me."

And that was true. As top sergeant Dink Munro was, next to the captain, the most powerful and respected member of F Battery. Things never went wrong in Dink's department, and if they had Sam would have bitten his tongue off before scolding him. Rogan sympathized with Dink and finally, to show what a friend of Dink's he was, he dug up a gallon of rum he'd stolen from a rum ration detail of Tommies in a village down near the railhead, and gave Dink a farewell party. I could hear the sounds of revelry until far into the night, and when Dink left us next morning he looked like the devil.

Rogan was smelling like a distillery when Sam Burwell came down to the echelon to see how things were going generally, but in particular to get a report on me. He found my wounds well healed and all the stiffness gone, which put him in such good humor that he quite overlooked Rogan's lapse.

"Sergeant Rogan," I heard him say, "Munro's gone and I need a top sergeant. How'd you like the job?"

"A soger has no preferences, sir. If the captain wants me I'll do me best to do honor to me predecessor. I'm not much of a penman, but give me a good batth'ry clerrk an' I guess I can do as well as the next. Who will the captain be afther makin' stable sergeant?"

"How about Givens? He wants to be a gunner, but he hasn't had much training on the guns, and he does know horses."

"I can thrust that lad, sir."

"Very well, Sergeant. You'll be made some time today."

That night Rogan was wearing the diamond, and Ern Givens came down from the firing battery, and the supply sergeant handed him out his sergeant's chevrons. Rogan thought they ought to have a party to celebrate the event, so Ern saddled me and rode five miles for the materials for a first-class party.

"Now, thin," Rogan announced the following morning, "we've wet our chevrons, so from now on we'll set an example av sobriety to this scandalous outfit." And thereafter there were no more parties among the non-coms.

The following day the Germans got on to the battery position, and when I say they got on I am not indulging in slang. They got on to it with a bracketing salvo, and while they were narrowing their bracket Sam Burwell ordered his gun crews to beat it, which they did, with the loss of two men killed and four wounded. Fortunately, Sam hadn't learned to love the two who were killed, and the four who were wounded were not seriously injured. There was no time to get the

guns out and nothing to be gained by serving them against enemy batteries not yet located, so Sam did the sensible thing. For two days a wild shell had been coming over occasionally, but it had not occurred to Sam that the enemy was craftily ranging on the position preparatory to bringing down a surprise fire.

Sam Burwell had ridden me up to the battery position at dawn that morning, and I was tied in the woods back of the battery. He got me out in time, but I'm here to tell you that my neighborhood was filled with noxious fumes and flying metal. The enemy threw over big stuff and continued throwing it over for two hours.

Believing they would drop a few salvos on the position intermittently during the night, Sam Burwell took the gun crews back to the echelon and gave them a good night's rest and a heavy feed. Just before dawn they went back to the position. No. 1 gun was demolished and No. 4 was buried, but not seriously damaged. Nos. 2 and 3 had a few holes in the shields and a spoke or two badly chewed, and our ammunition dump had been destroyed. During the day we got a new gun to replace No. 1 and dug up No. 4, and that night Rogan brought the teams up, and we took position in the old fake emplacements where the poor camouflage job made shadows.

We had good flash defilade there and remained two weeks—long enough to locate the new positions of the enemy batteries, which in the meantime paid daily attention to the old position at the fringe of the woods in our rear. Sam had fooled the Germans thoroughly, and the battery was quite swelled up with pride in

his performance. Men quickly learn to love a battery commander who uses his head to save his men.

Meanwhile the spare gun crews were preparing new positions, and when these were ready Rogan brought the teams up again and we moved. And the very next day the enemy, on suspicion, shelled the vacated position with all the ash-cans in the world. They searched the entire area—put a box barrage of light stuff around it and then commenced feeling for us with the big stuff. They used a lot of gas, too—phosgen, mustard and tear—and it was well that we were out of it in time, otherwise we would have been destroyed.

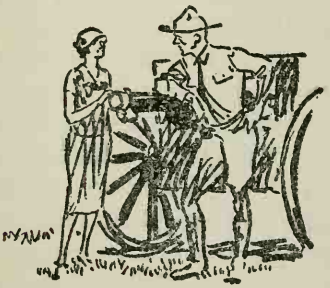
Sam Burwell used me quite a little. I had grown accustomed to the screech of shells passing overhead to the rear areas by this time, and the nauseating stench of war which drifted down to us on every vagrant breeze no longer terrified me. I knew every foot of the trail from the battery position to the echelon, and the captain rode me whenever he could do so without too much risk of losing me.

Rogan, I learned from Tip, had taken out his war-risk insurance and was prepared to die without notice, comforted by the thought that his death would make the world safe for Laurette. He received letters from her quite regularly and wrote her almost every day, and one day, when Ern was grooming me, Rogan came over with a very solemn look on his weather-beaten face.

"I've had a letter from Laurette," he announced. "She tells me that with fair luck I'll be a father before I'm kilt."

Ern proffered his hand, which Rogan shook silently. He seemed filled with emotion.

"We're pulling out of this sector," I heard him tell Ern. "The regiment has had six weeks av fine practhical inshtruction an' we're fit now to take the field in open warfare. The dhrive the enemy shtarted in March is gatherin' headway. They're sweepin' the Frinch before thim, Paris is threatened again an' for the firrst time since the A. E. F. came to France we're puttin' an army in the field. It's open warfare for us from now on, Ernie, me lad. Thank God we're fit for it at long lasht."



CHAPTER XXX

THAT night we got the guns out, and as we pulled out onto the country road that led to the main highway the other five sections joined us, and we marched back to the railhead where we had detrained when first coming into this area.

That was a dirty march. The night was dark and the road jammed with traffic, so our progress was slow. Interdiction fire was laid down at unexpected intervals at all crossroads, and we had to wait until it ceased and then make a run for it to get across. I looked back once and it seemed to me that we were leaving hell. There was the faint pulsating flicker of gun-fire on the horizon, the play of searchlights. Very lights and colored rockets, and the rumble of war followed us far. A and C Battery had some casualties that night, but in general the regiment got back in good order.

We rested a day in the ruined village where the weeping willows lined the river. At the railhead we received casualty replacements in men and animals, and our battery got two new guns, a new water-cart and a new lot of wire and telephone equipment. The men were also deloused and issued new clothing; then we entrained and rolled back into the south, and as we passed through villages and towns where newly arrived troops were still in training our men would call out:

"Gangway for combat troops!"

When we detrained we marched at once, and I noticed that on the roads we traveled there were two distinct lines of traffic—French troops and colonials coming down, spent, ragged, weary, demoralized; and fresh Yanks going up—most of the infantry in motor-trucks. There were thousands of infantrymen in a sort of greenish khaki with red piping on the chevrons of the non-coms, and Tip informed me that these were Marines. He didn't know much about them, but he had heard that they were carefully picked men and well disciplined.

We marched fifty minutes and rested ten, and at each rest the drivers dismounted and stood to head while the cannoneers brought buckets of water from near-by streams or farm-house wells. After wetting sponges with which the drivers wiped out our eyes and nostrils and the hot semi-bruised portions of the gunner horses' necks where the collars rested, the animals would be given the remainder of the water to drink.

The cannoneers no longer rode the guns and caissons as doubtless you have seen them do in Fourth of July parades. They walked beside the carriages, and it was hot, and they carried their packs, for everything possible was being done to lighten the draft on the horses in order to bring them fresh upon the field of combat. The animals had had quite an easy time of it in the campaign thus far, and, thanks to Ern and Rogan, our sick report was trifling. But the season had advanced now, and the mud had changed to dust, which rolled above us in a suffocating cloud; the heat was depressing; water was not obtainable at as frequent intervals as we would have desired, and with the

sweat pouring from every heaving flank, a great thirst gradually settled upon us.

Ern Givens rode with the led horses in the ninth section and old Rogan, silent, grim and efficient, rode with the captain at the head of the column. The lieutenants and the section chiefs, riding on the left flank, saw that the column was kept closed up, and all of the teams continuously in draft, for this war was hard on shirkers. We marched in daylight, even after the sounds of action far to our front became plainly audible, and I heard talk among the men of the folly of this. They had an abiding fear of being machine-gunned or bombed from an airplane. But French, American and British planes, droning far above us, had control of the air, so we marched in safety.

From time to time the captain rode me back along the battery column, seeing for himself how matters were going. Tip and Harmony followed at the tail of the column, eating the dust, but cheerful about it, nevertheless. They hauled the reel-cart.

"They tell me we've finally got the boys out of the trenches," Tip brayed. "Open warfare at last—and I, for one, am glad of it. But we'll soon need replacements. Boy, I'll tell the world we will."

There can be no denying that Tip was the most bloodthirsty little mule in the army. He was a soldier to the marrow of his bones. Campaigns thrilled him, and now that the work promised to be hard and the rations few and far between, his spirits rose almost to the point of coltishness. I suppose he could afford to feel cheerful, for he had had the best of care and was as slick as a mouse.

That night, when we parked in a field, a staff officer rode over to see Captain Burwell, and I saw Tip's ears stand straight up with amazement.

"Well, look who's here," he brayed. "Nobody else in the world but that ewe-necked Boodler. Remember that bum that was the mount of the Captain Carey who commanded us at Doniphan? Boodler dragged him, you'll remember. And here's old Boodler in France while better horses remain at home. I'll be damned!"

Sure enough there was Boodler. Tip and I hailed him, but he gave us the dead face.

"All swelled up because he's a divisional staff mount now," Tip sneered. "When that numskull of a captain got transferred to Finance, he must have sawed Boodler off on the Remount Service. How that scarecrow ever got by beats my time. Hey, Boodler! Have you seen any service yet?"

"I have," Boodler condescended to reply.

"You're with the divisional staff, Boodler. Got any gossip?"

"If I had I wouldn't impart it to either of you."

"You're not looking well, Boodler. Of course you never did look well, but travel hasn't improved you. What's wrong?"

"My digestion is a bit impaired," Boodler admitted.

"I always did think you had bots," Tip pursued cruelly. "Bots and a swelled head never did go well together. And your knees are a bit knocked up. Can't you keep your fool feet in your pocket?"

Boodler's long sad face grew a shade sadder. "I wish you wouldn't talk that way to me, Tip," he

pleaded. "It's not my fault that I'm here. I know I was never meant for a saddle animal; carrying a man is perhaps a bit harder on me than it is on the man, but I'm trying to do my job without whimpering. I know I was a bit cocky back at Doniphan, but—well, this war is a great equalizer."

"I'm sorry, Boodler," Tip hastened to reply. "Forget my not very kind remarks. I thought you still had the swelled head. Good luck to you, old-timer."

"Many a true thing is said in jest, Tip. I think I *have* bots. I'm pretty weak—and getting weaker, and this numskull of an A. D. C. can't ride me at my natural gait, which is a trot. No, he must gallop me always—up hill and down dale, on hard roads and soft. That's why my legs are puffed. . . . I wish I could die and have it done with."

My heart ached for poor Boodler. When I succeeded to his box stall and special privileges at Camp Doniphan he had not taken his defeat very well. But he was a game horse, down underneath all the riding-academy meringue, and Tip and I knew it now, knew too that he shouldn't be here, knew that very soon poor Boodler would be a part of the wastage along the highways, worn out and dead from exhaustion out of due time. He sensed our altered attitude toward him, and just before his man came out and mounted him again he walked over to the picket-line and rubbed noses with Tip and me, and for the first time since we had met I saw that Tip was profoundly affected.

"One doesn't mind being killed in action," he murmured when Boodler had left us, "but to be ridden to death by a fool—that's terrible. Well, the Fool-Killer

looks after fools. One day Boodler will take a header on a hard road, and when he does, let us hope he telescopes that monkey who gallops him."

You will, perhaps, want to know how Jeff fared thus far in the campaign. Well, not so good. Because he was unable to restrain his desire for hunting on his own, Rogan kept him chained most of the time back with the echelon, and when we marched he rode on the seat of a forage wagon and made a nuisance of himself barking at everything and everybody. However, even Jeff had his uses, for early in the morning of the second day of our march, when an ambulance overtook the tail of our column and Jeff barked at it, a young woman on the front seat with the driver cried excitedly:

"Oh, Jeff, Jeff! Soldier, isn't that Sergeant Rogan's dog Jeff?"

"Yes, miss," the wagoner replied. "This is F Battery of the ——th Artillery."

"Is Captain Burwell still commanding?"

"He's riding at the head of the column now, miss."

The girl thanked the wagoner (the incident was reported to me by Tip, who was following the escort wagon, helping Harmony drag the reel-cart) and the ambulance lurched ahead. Then, suddenly, I heard Mary Vardon's voice and turned:

"Sam, dear."

The Skipper turned and saw her. Well, he couldn't halt the battery to talk with her, but he did the next best thing. He leaped off me, climbed up on the seat of that ambulance and helped himself to two or three or four kisses. The battery was marching at route step,

so the drivers on No. 1 piece all said, "Ah-h-h-h-h!" The Skipper didn't hear them, of course, but Rogan did, and marked them down at once for extra duty. Sam Burwell rode up the road about a quarter of a mile, in the ambulance, talking to his sweetheart, before he jumped off and waited for us to come up. As he swung up on me again he looked at Rogan.

"It would be hard on us, Sergeant, to have to die in this war."

"It's hard enough on me as it is, sir," Rogan replied. "The only French scholar in the outfit—De Lorme—fell sick at the last halt. He was me private secreth'ry thranslatin' into Frinch me letthers to me wife, an' thranslatin' into English her letthers to me."

"We have a French liaison officer with the battalion, Rogan. All he has to do is offer a lot of advice we can't use. I'll ask him to act as your interpreter."

"There'll be a child, sir," said Rogan.

"I can stand for your wife," the Skipper answered, "but if I had known of the child, you would have remained safely in the Remount Service. Now it will be just your luck to stop a chunk of metal when you can least afford it."

"I know it, sir." Rogan made the pronouncement very simply and with the air of one who states an unimportant fact. "I shall get mine in this war."

"Quit croaking. You depress me," the Skipper ordered. "What will I do for a top sergeant when you're gone? You're the last decent fragment of the old army left in my battery."

"Ye might do worse nor Sergeant Givens, sir." How like Rogan that was—always remembering the

ones he loved! "How are the lootinints comin' along, sir? Are they a help to the captain?"

"They never had discipline and they take to it with ill grace, Rogan. I'm always on top of them, and for that I fear I'm not popular. It's hard to unspoil spoiled men, but I'm doing it with Lieutenant Galwey. He's brave and intelligent and I think he sees now the error of being too soft. Although I warned him against it, he would permit some of his platoon to occupy his dugout when we were up in that quiet sector near Verdun; so on a night when the wire was cut and had to be mended under shell-fire he had the devil's own time getting these lads to do the job.

"One of them had the audacity to suggest that the lieutenant order somebody else out to do it, and three others grumbled. He'd always been so kind to them they couldn't understand his action in ordering them to do such a dangerous job now. Instead of being firm with them he referred the issue to me. So I cured him. I put him in charge of the detail. By God, they knew better than to talk back to me. Galwey had a dirty time of it repairing the wire with that sulky squad and it taught him a lesson. From being a softy he's grown hard as nails—and developed a bitter tongue. And he *can* shoot the guns.

"I believe I could rest easy in my grave if he had the battery. What he required was responsibility and I've given it to him. I had expected much from Second Lieutenant Briggs. He was an old army man and a top sergeant for three enlistments. But he's top-sergeant material and nothing more. Can't even report his observation of fire correctly. Means well but he

gets rattled. I really don't know what to do with Briggs."

"Send him up with the first wave av infanthry as liaison officer," Rogan suggested callously. "Whin he's kilt or wounded we'll know him no more an' that'll be one worry off the captain's mind."

"It's the confounded mathematics," the Skipper defended Briggs. "As a top sergeant he wasn't required to do mental arithmetic. Poor Briggs. He's so fearful of making a costly mistake that he does nothing. The first time we get a new draft of Samur graduates I'm going to ask the colonel to blooey Briggs to regimental supply. He'll do a man's work in supply."

I forgot to mention that there were two new lieutenants—a first and a second—with the battery when we joined them. I learned now that Barth, the first, was a false alarm, but that Merton, the second, was a whiz-bang.

I was to learn, too, within the next twenty-four hours, how keen a judge of men our Skipper was. All day long we marched, with the sound of a terrific battle growing closer and closer, until eventually we commenced meeting the wreckage of battle coming down from the front. From the talk that went on around us we learned that the Germans had the French on the run, the latter being quite demoralized and unable to put up even a good rear-guard action; I learned too that we were throwing an army in to take over their job and halt the victorious and rapid advance of the enemy on Paris. Well, it was a job for men who were fresh and full of the confidence of ignorance.

About two o'clock in the afternoon, while the battery pulled off into a field to unhitch, water, feed and groom the horses, and feed the men, the Skipper, accompanied by his battery detail, rode on toward the front. The road was too congested for traffic, and when we found it was under interdiction fire we obliqued off into the fields and made better progress.

Once an airplane swooped down on us but the Skipper was on the alert and we scattered like quail. The Hun got a burst in on the Skipper and me, but missed; as he passed over us, he zoomed upward and back, intending to make a complete loop and come back at us again. But while he was turning, a company of infantry lying in that field opened fire on him and brought him down.

About two miles in the rear of the front line the detail dismounted and leaving men to hold the horses for the detail, with the exception of the Skipper and Rogan, who remained mounted, went forward afoot. The Skipper had a map, and while Rogan scouted around to locate positions for the guns the captain went forward to locate an observation post from which he could get unobstructed observation of the terrain. The enemy was not advancing. His advance guard had merely got in touch with ours and was content to hold us back until reenforced.

After the captain had selected his observation post he inspected and approved the position selected by Rogan. The first sergeant is not supposed to select a position, but Sam Burwell realized Rogan knew as much about the selection of a position as he did, and he was glad to have Rogan help him out. On our way

back we followed the main road and dropped men off at all crossroads to act as markers to guide the battery up in the dark and see that it didn't get lost. Also, we located a gully to hide the echelon. We had a dirty time of it getting back to the battery, and Ern Givens had barely time to water me and groom me while I munched oats from a nose-bag, before night fell and we harnessed and hitched and took the road again.

We got up and into position about daylight without loss, and the teams got back to the echelon without disturbance, although there was considerable metal going over into the rear areas.

I will not attempt to describe the days that followed, except to say that now we knew there was a war on. The battery moved frequently—sometimes half a dozen times a day, and it moved in daylight if it had to. And when it had to, it often paid the price. One night an ash-can dropped in on our picket-line, and eight horses were blown to pieces. We lost several horses and men while bringing up the teams to snake the guns out or put them into a new position. The roads were raked by shell-fire continuously, so we kept to the fields as much as possible, but even here they bombed us and machine-gunned us. I never knew how many men we lost, but I do know that one day thirty-two casualty replacements joined us and Lieutenant Barth blew up. Tip, who with Harmony had been drawing the reel-cart gathering up our wire to stretch it in the new position, told me about this.

It seems a German battery had located us. Simultaneously we located them—in fact, we had the better of it, because Sam Burwell caught them going into

action and smashed their teams. Unable to move their guns, those Germans never faltered, but went into action right in the open, for it was a case where they had to get us before we could get them.

From off on a flank Tip watched the duel, his fierce old heart swelling with pride as he saw how our gunners acted. Barth's platoon was closest to him, with Barth standing between both guns a little in their rear, the telephone receiver clamped to his ear. From a low crest off on a flank the captain, lying in the open with the instrument sergeant and the telephone corporal, was phoning in the firing data.

Barth was doing well until the supreme test of a field-artillery man came to him, and that was when the enemy bracketed his guns and the overs and shorts commenced falling with marvelous rapidity. The bracket narrowed; every man at those guns knew that it was only a matter of seconds until a shell would drop under his gun or make a direct hit, and out in front a German observer would murmur "Target" into his field telephone.

Barth lay down. It was the sensible thing for him to do with all those shells exploding around him, but suddenly his guns ceased firing, and Tip saw the gunners turn and look inquiringly at Barth, who waved at them to desert their guns and run for it; then he dropped the telephone receiver and set an example in skulking.

Poor devil, he didn't have the stuff in him. He couldn't stand up under a destructive fire. The overs and shorts, coming with such monotonous regularity, broke his nerve and when he could no longer control

his voice to give his crews the firing data, naturally the fire ceased. But the overs and shorts did not break the nerve of the section chief on No. 1 gun. That section chief was Sergeant Ed Parks. He picked up the telephone and evidently he got an earful from the captain, for he took command immediately and commenced intoning the firing data to the gun crews; once more the two guns commenced to speak.

The next thing Tip knew those overs and shorts were just fifty percent less. The platoon, under Sergeant Ed Parks, had knocked out two of the enemy's guns and silenced them. Then both guns of the platoon concentrated on the other guns, one gun at a time. And, gun after gun, they silenced them, too.

When that duel was over half our first-string crews of the first platoon were dead or wounded, but—the guns had never ceased to function. The survivors had merely dragged the casualties out of the way and continued to feed the guns.

That duel had only lasted five minutes, yet by that time the guns were so hot they would have had to cease firing, anyhow. Sam Burwell left the instrument sergeant to observe and ran down to the battery. Tip saw him ask Sergeant Parks something; then he started running to the rear, following Lieutenant Barth.

In a little while he came walking back very slowly for Barth was beyond court-martial for cowardice. As he ran a long over had fixed his clock, while Ed Parks, who took his place in command of the platoon, had escaped without a scratch.

We had to move out of there in a hurry, so a runner went down to the echelon with orders for Rogan to

bring up the teams. He came on the fast trot, with me tethered to his saddle and trotting beside his mount. Ah, O'Malley, my heart thrills to this day at the memory of that gallant sight! On they came in column—a wave of Rogan's arm and they were doing "On Right into Line"; then each team headed for its gun and caisson, sweeping across its trail, turning and halting with the limbers in position as accurately as if at drill.

A shout—a heave—the gun trails came up and dropped into their proper places on the limber, and the guns were moving out, with the caissons, also limbered, turning and falling into column behind them. As we pulled out, stretcher-bearers were coming up for our wounded. As for the dead—well, there was no time to think of them.

We went down a road and into a little swale. It was a narrow road lined with poplar trees, and in their shade we rested off on a flank while the guns went into action again, firing with the old monotonous regularity, for by this time spare cannoneers had come up from the echelon to take the places of the casualties.

I found myself tethered again to Rogan's mount, while the old soldier stroked Tip's nose.

"A good outfit, Tip," I heard him address the mule. "You an' me have sogered a bit in our day, but this has been our day av days. We've seen red-legs in action today, ye ould walloper. Trained, disciplined men provin' the value av trainin' an' discipline whin the pinch came. Oho, ye ould divil, ye've been *blesséd!*"

Sure enough a splinter of shell had ripped a deep gash across old Tip's breast.

"I'm sorry, Tip," I nickered softly.

"Scratch," snorted Tip contemptuously. "I'll carry on, never fear."

Rogan called up a soldier. "The shtock has had precious little to eat the past two days," he announced. "Lead the Professor an' my mount off into the field yonder. There's a nice bit av grazin' to be had there while we're waitin'. Keep yer eye on the batthery an' should ye see us mountin' come peltin' back here in a hurry."

The soldier mounted Rogan's horse, and we jogged to the rear about two hundred yards, where some clover about six inches high grew in a patch of sub-irrigated ground. The soldier inspected it for signs of mustard gas, but finding none, he slipped our bits and permitted us to graze, a privilege for which we were tremendously grateful, for we were indeed quite famished.

Suddenly a flock of shells came over the little crest behind which our battery had taken its firing position. They were overs. Three landed harmlessly in the field between the guns and the road on which the teams stood, but one crashed into the road about ten feet in the rear of the reel-cart.

I had filled my mouth and while chewing had looked up just as this shell broke; when the smoke and dust had settled Harmony and Tip and Rogan were down!

"We'll have to get out of here a-flyin'," I heard the soldier mutter as he slipped the bits back in our mouths, mounted and galloped back to the road with Rogan's mount running beside me.

Another salvo came over, but this time they broke

closer to our guns, their fragmentation whistling over our heads. The soldier rode up to the wreck of the reel-cart and dismounted.

Rogan, who had been stroking Tip's nose when the shell came, lay in a welter of blood and dirt a few feet in front of Tip, whose belly had been ripped open. Harmony was dead, but Tip still lived, despite his dreadful wound.

"I'm done in, Prof," he moaned. "I'm suffering, buddy. Got it in the guts, and this time it's old Tip for Fiddler's Green. Back up, amigo, and kick me in the forehead while I have strength to hold up my head. A fair kick, Prof, a true kick. Give me all you've got. Kick my brains out; at least knock me cold so I'll not suffer."

My blood turned to water. "I can't, Tip," I cried.

Tip commenced to scream in mortal agony. "Don't go back on a pal, don't go back on a pal. I'd have done it for you, Prof. Dear old Rogan, ah, he hears me. He isn't dead, is he? No, no, he lives—lives long enough to do the decent thing by me. Killed in action! That's how we go. Like soldiers—good-by, Prof. *Bonne chance, mon ami, bonne chance!*"

Rogan had turned over in the gory bath in which he lay. His face was twisted with pain and great drops of sweat stood out on his brow, but no sound escaped him, as he drew his pistol with his right hand and drawing himself slowly and laboriously along on his elbows (for his legs were useless) he advanced inch by inch upon Tip. . . . He leaned against the mule's neck and cocked his pistol. Tip raised his weary head and nosed the man he loved; Rogan's red hand stroked

the mealy nose and that was all of their farewell. Then Tip inclined his head toward Rogan and the blue barrel of the pistol crept into the long ear. . . .

A voice cried sharply, "Drivers! Prepare to mount! Mount!"

We were going to change position again. The soldier who had me in charge mounted, and as the teams dashed forward and swung in to limber the guns and caissons, this soldier galloped up to the Skipper's O. P. on top of the hill.

"First Sergeant Rogan's gone west, sir, and old Tip's gone with him. The reel-cart's smashed—both mules gone, sir."

Sam Burwell mounted me and I galloped with him down to where Tip and Harmony and Rogan had received their honorable discharge. Tip was stretched out on his side and Rogan, with his head pillowed on Tip's neck, his pistol with one exploded cartridge half thrust back into the holster, lay ruddy and still.

The Skipper sat for a moment, uncovered in the presence of these two who had fought the good fight, who had borne the heat and the burdens of the day and had answered their last call.

"Peace, brothers, peace," I heard him murmur. Then he whirled me, and we galloped away after the battery.

CHAPTER XXXI

IN battle, O'Malley, one has no time for grief. There is work to be done and one may not knock off work to analyze one's emotions. Almost before I could realize that my buddy Tip and our friend Rogan would never march with the outfit again, I was galloping ahead of the battery, followed by the battery detail, seeking a new position. The enemy was retreating, and we had to maintain contact with his rear guard and keep him on the move. Men, horses, material—nothing was too sacred to expend in our important task of keeping up with the infantry, smashing machine-gun nests, pill-boxes and strong points on their front and immobilizing enemy batteries with gas when we could not reach them with shell.

In static warfare, Ern Givens, as stable sergeant, spent most of his time with the echelon in the rear—a situation which, because of my love for my master, I found particularly gratifying. In static warfare the first sergeant, too, spent most of his time with the echelon, which was generally hidden in a place where the risk of battle was reduced to a minimum. In open warfare, however, that was changed, and to prove it, there was First Sergeant Rogan lying in a welter of blood and dust on Tip's neck while the caissons went rolling along.

Yes, Rogan and Tip had made their last transfer in

the service. They belonged to the sanitary train now! The first sergeant's office was vacant, so presently the Skipper sent an orderly down to the echelon with instructions to the battery clerk to write out an order appointing Stable Sergeant Ernest Givens first sergeant vice Rogan, killed in action, and a request to regimental headquarters that Corporal Condon be appointed a sergeant vice Givens, promoted to first sergeant. These documents, when typed, were to be brought up to the firing position for the captain's signature, and Ern Givens was to report to the captain immediately.

"You ride the Professor back to the echelon," Sam Burwell ordered the messenger. "I don't care to risk him any longer up here, so bring me back a battery mount and tell Sergeant Givens to select him for me. He will understand. If you're smart you can dodge the shell-fire. Most of the overs are meant for the reserves in the rear."

So the orderly mounted me and away we went across the fields, leaping ditches, old trenches and shell-holes, keeping a sharp lookout for the line of enemy artillery fire and avoiding it shrewdly. The battery clerk was in the kitchen yarning with the cooks and Ern Givens when we pranced in with the Skipper's message. Without a word he went to his typewriter, wrote out the order and request, and handed them to Ern Givens, who read them.

"How did Rogan get it?" he asked the orderly.

"I don't know, Sarge. I was up ahead with the battery detail and you know how it is. A fellow can't see everything that goes on in the outfit. All I know is

that him and Tip and Harmony has gone west. Rogan couldn't lose the diamond for any other reason."

Ern nodded and two big tears rolled down his cheeks, as he walked over to the picket-line and commenced inspecting the horses.

Now, the campaign had commenced to bear heavily on our animals. The best horses were up with the battery, and those remaining with the echelon were in poor flesh, some of them slightly wounded, most of them with galls, scalds, shoulder sores and burns. Some, too, had been gassed.

Ern shook his head. "Skipper needs a real horse, and there's nothing here strong enough to last him a week. Here, son, you saddle this animal—he's the best of a sorry lot—and ride back with me. I'll take the Professor back to the Skipper." He leaned his wet cheek up against my nose. "The tail goes with the hide, old pal," he murmured chokingly. "A good horse is needed as never a good horse was needed in this battery before; you've had the best of it always, you're in good flesh and not on sick report, so I'll not play you for a favorite."

I didn't want him to. We were both in the war for all we had to give, and if it was going to be our luck to transfer to the sanitary train and Ern could make the transfer without whimpering, then I could too.

We rode back across the fields and intersected the road down which the battery had traveled, about a hundred yards north of where Tip and Harmony and Rogan lay among the wreckage of the reel-cart. I could see an ambulance halted there with the driver, and his buddy just getting out to look at Rogan.

When we found the teams parked behind the high battered stone walls of a farm compound, Ern and the orderly dismounted and made their way on foot up to the battery. Two lieutenants were out on each flank, observing the fire bilaterally, and the captain was at the guns. He signed the order making Ern Givens top sergeant while the battery was firing a salvo; then he corrected for range and deflection as the observation of that salvo came in from the flanks and signed the other paper.

"I brought the Professor back for the captain," said First Sergeant Ern Givens. "I understand why the captain sent him back to the echelon."

"If he were my own horse, Sergeant—"

"He *is* the captain's horse. Sentiment must not interfere with this job we've got to do, sir. Unless wounded or otherwise crippled, the Professor will be carrying the captain long after all the cold-blooded saddle animals in this battery have died by the roadside. He's eating government rations, sir. Let him earn them."

"Thanks," said the Skipper. "So be it."

So, until the enemy dropped back to the Hindenburg line and another big drive had to be organized to rout him out of there, I assure you, O'Malley, I was a pretty busy horse. I got a whiff of phosgen gas at Cantigny and was on sick report two weeks, but after that I simply *had* to go back to duty. And the first day I was back I was hit four times with machine-gun bullets in my hind quarters. Consequently, when the battery pulled out of the ruins of Cantigny I could not march and had to be left behind.

It was touch and go with me that day. The Skipper sent for the salvage squad to come and look me over. You will want to know what the salvage squad is, of course. Well, that's a detail from the Remount Service, probably, that follows up the advance. When they come across a wounded horse, or a horse or mule that has dropped from exhaustion and starvation, they examine him and if they think he can be nursed back to health, they get him upon a horse ambulance, carry him to the rear and do their best by him. If, on the other hand, they decide the animal isn't worth trying to save, they put a pistol in his ear and end his troubles *tout de suite*—which is French and means P. D. Q.

Well, when the officer in command of the salvage detail looked me over and said I could be saved, I was in a fair way of being looked after decently, until he made the discovery that I was not a government horse. He was one of those conscientious wretches that infect the army and try to hobble it with red tape—always burying their cold noses in the regulations. He declared he had no authority to waste government time and money on private mounts.

Ern and Sam Burwell took counsel together.

"That horse-thief knows the battery is moving and that it's impossible to take the Professor with us, sir," said Ern. "He knows we'll have to abandon the horse. Sir, I have a hunch about that man. He knows horses —and his eyes fairly watered when they roved over the Professor. The minute the battery pulls out, he'll have the horse in an ambulance. And he'll cure him up and use him as his own mount, hoping the captain will never be the wiser."

"There's sense in what you say, Sergeant Givens," Sam Burwell replied, "but what are we going to do about it? The horse is too stiff from his wounds to move."

"I'll put him out of his misery, sir. I'll not leave him here alone to suffer—and I'd rather kill him than see that inhuman salvage man possess him."

"He's your horse. I'm helpless, Sergeant," Sam Burwell half groaned. "With proper care he'd recover and be as well as he ever was, but without care he'll develop tetanus and die a horrible death. I—I think, Sergeant, he's worthy of a better fate than that."

Ern Givens nodded and walked over to me, pulling his pistol as he came.

"What you going to do to that horse, Sergeant?" the veterinary of the salvage detail demanded.

"Well, since you won't be a good fellow and take the poor brute in charge," Ern Givens replied, "I'm going to blow his brains out—and at that he has more brains and more heart than you, you cur, will have if you live to be as old as Methuselah."

"You're talking to an officer," the veterinary almost yelled.

"If you weren't an officer I wouldn't be talking to you, man. I'd be taking you apart to see what makes you go. I suppose you know you're a dirty animal."

"I'll have you court-martialed for this."

"Great. Fly at it, but remember I haven't cussed you out in front of witnesses, and my word is as good as yours any day you care to file charges. Man, but you're a lousy pup! You're without bowels of mercy."

He took my head in his arms and stroked me and

held my jowls close against his. "You know it breaks my heart to do it, don't you, Prof," he whispered. "But this is war, pardner, and in war we can't pick our own path out of a dirty situation. God, what a horse you've been! And now you're thin and stiff and crippled from a mess of flesh wounds that'd heal in a month if this skunk would only be human and give you the chance he could give you if he wanted to. If I abandon you here, he'll be riding you six weeks from now; he'll claim you and take you back to God's country and sell you for a couple of thousand dollars. By God, I'll not let you be ridden by anybody but a man. I'll—I'll—"

And then poor Ern commenced to weep. "I'd rather a heap kill him than you, old pal," he whispered to me, "but if I kill an officer they'll shoot me—" And he held my nose close in the crook of his left arm while his right hand went up, and I felt the cold barrel of his pistol feeling for my ear.

O'Malley, I didn't want to die. I felt that if I could but delay matters something would happen, so I threw up my head, and Ern had to start honeying me again to get it down. But as often as the pistol barrel crept into my ear I tossed my head, and finally Ern stepped out in front of me and I knew he intended shooting me through the forehead!

He was suffering so, my heart went out to him. No, he didn't want to do it. I knew that. All the fighting he'd been through—all the fear he must have felt secretly under fire—were as nothing compared with the ordeal he was facing now. His poor face was twitching, and each time he raised his pistol, the tears

blurred his eyes and he had to wipe them away in order to sight. And that veterinary from the salvage squad, who had put his pistol in the ears of a thousand horses and was calloused, stood there stolidly watching my beloved master's misery.

Suddenly Ern Givens turned on the man. "I'm going to count ten," he announced quietly, "and if you're here staring at me when I finish, I'm going to put six in your guts, so help me God!"

If I had been a human being I would have roared with laughter at the precipitate manner in which that man removed himself from the scene!

I refused to lower my head so Ern could shoot me between the eyes. I was stalling for time—stalling for something to happen. I didn't blame Ern for wanting to kill me of course. He was uncertain about me—uncertain as to what would happen to me when the battery pulled out—and he preferred to see me dead rather than suffering or in alien hands.

He took hold of my head-stall and tried to draw my head down, but still I refused. Then he got a green cabbage leaf and tossed it on the ground before me, thinking I would lower my head to nibble it. But again I disappointed him.

"Prof, I think you know," he sobbed, and stepped around to my left side to shoot me through the heart. But, notwithstanding the pain it cost me, I turned and continued facing him—and suddenly he put his pistol back in the holster and walked away.

At the corner of the street I heard him say to somebody, "Take him, you dog, take him. I haven't got the heart to kill him."

And then he was gone. Half an hour later a horse ambulance pulled up and some men commenced urging me to make the effort to step up into the low truck. The veterinary captain was superintending the job. But I would not move a leg, even though they beat me, for something told me that if I continued to stall for time, something would happen.

The veterinary lost his temper. "Balky damned brute," he cried angrily. "Quit monkeying with him." He pulled his pistol and stepped out in front of me, and at that moment a woman's voice cried sharply:

"Don't you kill that horse."

I turned my head in the direction of the voice—and there stood Mary Vardon, in her nurse's uniform.

"My dear lady, his case is hopeless—" the veterinary began, but Mary Vardon cut him short.

"I don't care whether it is or not. He shall have his chance. He's a private horse and his owner has just given him to me. I'm here with the field hospital. I'll take care of that horse. You leave him to me. I know horses."

Her eyes were blazing so, any fool would have known better than to have opposed her.

"He wears no government brand, miss. If you want him, help yourself," the veterinary replied, and walked away, when Mary Vardon took me by the head-stall and urged me to follow her. It was a mighty hard and painful thing for me to do, but in obedience lay my one chance to survive and get back to the battery, so I obeyed. My steps were short, halting and infrequent, and more than once I fear I was weak enough to give voice to my distress, but presently Mary man-

aged to get me to the edge of the town, and house me in what was left of a church.

A soldier watching her was asked to see if he could find some straw thereabouts for my bed, but evidently he was a horseman, for he replied:

"If that horse ever gets down he'll not be likely to get up. Horses have some sense and this animal knows he'll be better off standing up. A horse can stand up indefinitely, miss. I tell you what I'll do, though. I'm with a wagon train and I'll drop off a couple of bales of hay and a couple sacks of oats for him tomorrow night."

He did. Mary used to come every morning before going on duty and every night after coming off duty to dress my wounds and bring me water and feed. At the end of ten days I was able to move around a little. The Germans had given up hope of recapturing Cantigny, so the town was now what they termed quite quiet. The field hospital was in a huge château on the edge of the town, and the Germans respected the Red Cross flag flying over it and contented themselves with throwing a few salvos of long-range stuff into the town from time to time, in the hope of catching troops passing through.

As the zone of operations moved farther north, the field hospital moved too. But Mary Vardon did not abandon me. Knowing she would no longer be in position to care for me, she made arrangements with a couple of soldiers to do the needful. They belonged to a G. P. F. regiment far forward, engaged in harassing with their long-range fire the German troop concentrations in the back areas; and the particular job of these

two bucks was to haul ammunition in a truck up from the railroad for those G. P. F.'s.

The day the hospital was being moved these two soldiers had stopped there to drop off a load of wounded somebody had sawed off on them, and after delivering the cargo they stood around taking an eyeful of Mary Vardon, until the medical officer in charge ordered them to get busy and load hospital supplies in their truck. Thereupon they explained to the medical man that they were line troops engaged in hauling ammunition from down below, and as such they couldn't help him out.

"Then you're going down empty?" Mary Vardon inquired; and when they answered her in the affirmative she found herself an opportunity to go A. W. O. L. for five minutes and lead them over to the ruined church where I was stabled. There she told them all about me, how I was her sweetheart's horse and how I'd come to France as a private mount.

"Hum-m-m!" said one of these hard bucks. "Belongs to a staff officer, eh? Catch me waitin' on a staff officer's horse."

"He belongs to the line," Mary Vardon flared up at him. "He's an artillery mount. Captain Burwell is a battery commander."

"Oh, well, seein' as how he's a red-leg," the soldier replied, "I guess we'll have to oblige you." He looked very hard-boiled, but even I could see he was just having his little joke. "What do you want we should do with this horse, miss?"

"I want you to take him down to the rear as far as you can in your truck. The civilian population is com-

ing back to the country the German artillery cannot reach, and if you try real hard I'm sure you can find some peasant who will agree to board and stable this horse until his owner can send for him. Make the best bargain you can and pay in advance. Here's the money." And she handed them a hundred dollars in United States bills. "There should be enough money left to give you two boys a good time. On your way back stop in at the hospital and give me the name and address of the peasant who has agreed to care for the horse."

"We'll take a good square meal, a couple of bottles of wine and about five dollars' worth of cigarettes out it and bring the rest back," the hard-boiled driver assured her. "It's been four months since we seen the paymaster, but we're not graftin' off army nurses—yet."

They got some very heavy planks and made a ramp up to the tail of their ammunition truck. Then they threw in a lot of hay for a bed, and Mary Vardon led me up into the truck and gave me the signal to lie down which Ern Givens had taught her in Camp Doniphan. She need not have bothered to make me lie down, however. I would have done so anyhow for I was afraid to stand up in that open truck. One of the soldiers held my halter-shank, the other took the wheel and away we went, back over the bloody ground we had fought over in April and May.

Nobody bothered us until we got to the ammunition dump at the railhead, and then an officer tried to keep us from going farther. But the hard-boiled driver told him I belonged to their division commander and

that whoever interfered with his orders would probably wish he hadn't. So the officer growled a little while about sentiment being out of place in war and let them go on after warning them to hurry back.

Well, those were two good eggs, even if they did belong in a motorized battery. About ten miles farther down country they found an old woman puttering around the ruins of her little farm, so they unloaded me there and talked A. E. F. French to her for half an hour before they managed to make her understand what they wanted. At that I think those good old yellow-backed U. S. bills did most of the talking, for their language is something all French people can understand.

This old woman's name was Yvonne Servieux, but her address was a mystery, so one of the soldiers got out a pencil and a piece of paper and made a panoramic sketch of the country with her farm drawn in so accurately nobody could possibly fail to recognize it. With that sketch in his possession a fool could have found the place, even though he had never seen it before.

Then they started bargaining for my board, which, as far as I could see, was to consist of a wheat field trampled flat by the Third Division, and sugar beets uprooted by shell-fire. Fortunately, the hard-boiled chap had only showed the old lady one twenty-dollar bill; so after she had figured that in francs, she said it would do, and they gave it to her without further argument, climbed into their truck and left me.

CHAPTER XXXII

I HAD been with Yvonne six weeks, when one day a motorcycle with a side-car came put-putting up to what was left of her farm, and in the side-car was First Sergeant Ern Givens with a saddle, bridle, nose-bag and saddle-blanket.

If you think I wasn't happy to see my master again, O'Malley—or you, Taffy—you're both poor judges of emotion. My wounds had healed, all the stiffness and soreness had gone out of my quarters and I was in good flesh, albeit sadly in need of grooming and shoeing. At sight of Ern I whinnied and buck-jumped across the field to greet him. Yvonne Servieux was a little dubious about giving me up, even on the strength of the panoramic sketch which Ern presented, until she saw I recognized Ern; then she made no protest.

Well, Ern got a pair of pliers out of the nose-bag and pulled off my worn shoes and replaced them with a new set he had brought. Then he groomed me, saddled and bridled me, and rode away, after giving my landlady five dollars extra for good luck.

The motorcycle had of course in the meantime departed. Ern sang, as we jogged along, the lilting cowboy songs he used to sing in the days when we worked cattle together on the Alamo Ranch, and, although I well knew what we were going back to, there was a lilt in my equine heart, too.

"We're headed for hell, old-timer," Ern assured me as he stroked my neck, "but it's home to us."

Presently we overtook a regiment of French field-artillery, and Ern begged a couple of feeds of oats for me from the supply sergeant. He had a loaf of bread and a can of corned beef in the saddle-bags, and at noon we lunched under a tree in a field off the road. Ern watched me carefully and did not push me too hard or too fast that first day. We made about fifteen miles, I should imagine, and bivouacked for the night with an engineer outfit. None of the enlisted men knew where they were going, but there was a strong suspicion that troops were being quietly concentrated on the northern flank of the western face of the Marne salient, preparatory to smashing it in and driving the enemy back to the Vesle River. Ern further confirmed this suspicion with the news that the troops that had participated in the Cantigny offensive were being moved down to the vicinity of the Forêt de Villers-Cotterêts.

We found our battery in some woods a mile west of a village called Saint-Pierre Aigle, some eight miles southwest of Soissons, about daylight next day. All night long we had been in a jam of troops of all kinds, that lined every road, hurrying forward under cover of the dark. From the gossip along the line of march I learned that no troops moved during daylight and that Foch was planning a surprise attack.

What a homecoming *that* was! The echelon was only half a mile back of the firing battery, which was already in position, and practically all the men were there eating breakfast when Ern rode me in. They all

dropped their mess-kits and made a rush for us. So, just to show them they weren't extending a welcome to a cripple, Ern reined me up on my hind legs, and I walked forward about six feet, then knelt and bowed to the outfit. The men crowded around me, stroking me, examining my scars, and exclaiming at the good condition in which they found me. Lieutenant Galwey gave me a piece of bread with jam on it and the Skipper was so happy I thought he'd weep.

"Sergeant, I'm tremendously relieved," I heard him tell Ern Givens. "I wasn't at all certain that pass I secured for you from the colonel would get you by the M. P.'s, and I considered it a hundred-to-one shot you wouldn't find the Professor when you got there. I feared you might waste time hunting for him, get back here too late for our new show, and be picked up for a skulker."

"I guess when a man soldiers in this outfit he gets what he goes after, sir," Ern replied happily. "Well, here's the captain's horse."

"You're much too kind, Sergeant Givens, but if I never needed him before I need him now. That taste of open warfare we had at Cantigny was just duck soup compared with that we're about to tackle now."

"When do we start, sir?" Ern asked, in a voice so low none of the other men might hear him. Enlisted men, you understand, O'Malley, were not supposed to be in the confidence of the commanding officer, for in war secrets must be kept. But Ern Givens was the top sergeant and a good one, and although an enlisted man, he had his captain's entire confidence.

"The infantry jumps off at 4:45 tomorrow morn-

ing," the Skipper told him. "We lay down a rolling barrage ahead of the Second Brigade, consisting of the 26th and 28th Infantry."

"I wanner go home," Ern Givens wailed humorously.

"You certainly will if I send you out with Lieutenant Galwey and one gun to accompany the infantry advance and shoot up machine-gun nests and strong points."

"Ouch!" That was all Ern Givens thought about it.

At 4:35 the barrage started. I thought that I had heard noise before but I hadn't. Far to both flanks the orange-colored flashes of the guns flared into the darkness and from the 155 batteries in our rear the big shells went rumbling over us; beneath the roar of the artillery we could hear the stuttering, minor rattle of the machine-gun barrage.

I found myself tethered close to the big Norman, Banjo, who was now employed solely as a pack-horse to carry the range-finder, the B. C. telescope and the field-telephone equipment.

"Where's Bingo?" I asked.

"We left him in Cantigny, Prof. He rolled in mustard gas and sniffed too much phosgen, so the stable sergeant shot him." Banjo cocked his ears to the front. "Time for something to start dropping on us," he decided.

But nothing dropped on us, for the reason that the attack was a complete surprise to the enemy and he had no knowledge of our position, although Banjo and I knew he would glean that knowledge from his aircraft as soon as it was light. It was with considerable

relief, therefore, that within an hour an order came down from the firing battery to bring up the teams.

"Infantry must be advancing steadily, when we have to move forward so soon," I told Banjo.

The drivers cinched their saddles and stood ready to mount, while Ern Givens cinched his horse and me, mounted, and tethered me to his horse, a poor worn creature I remembered had a reputation as an outlaw when I first joined the battery in France. Under the attrition of war and Ern Givens's horsemastership, however, he had lost his high spirits and surrendered to the inevitable.

At Ern's order the drivers mounted, and we went forward with the limbers. As soon as we got there Captain Burwell mounted me and galloped forward with the B. C. detail to select a new position and O. P., while Lieutenant Galwey followed with the guns. Within the hour we moved again, and at eight o'clock a plane came over and bombed and machine-gunned the gun crews; but strangely enough we had but one casualty. And again I was proud of my outfit, for I could see them at work from the little patch of trees where I was standing with the horse-holders and the horses of the B. C. detail. Even while metal was showering down on the position the guns never faltered in their incessant song. No, not even a sour note. The section chief merely dragged the dead man out of the way and took the latter's position at the trail, prepared to swing the gun if necessary.

About ten o'clock dozens of German prisoners came through the woods, their hands held high over their heads as they headed for our rear, with slightly

Within the hour we moved again, and a plane came over and bombed the gun crews.

wounded doughboys herding them forward. Plenty of German shells were going over us to the reserves in the rear, but our own planes quite generally kept the German planes from spotting us. At one o'clock we were each given two quarts of oats and a drink from the rain-water that had accumulated in old shell-holes; the ration detail brought up a hot lunch to the cannoneers and the B. C. detail; and everything was as jake with us as we could wish until about three o'clock, when an enemy plane swooped down and machine-gunned us. He flew right down the line of guns and as I stood watching him disappear into the north he suddenly dived into a ravine and did not come up again.

"Good work," Banjo decided. "A machine-gun got that bird."

The rate of fire of our guns slowed perceptibly, so we knew there were more casualties. In a little while spare cannoneers came up on the run, and the cadence of fire increased again. But that enemy aviator had dropped a rocket on us, and a streak of yellow smoke now hung perpendicularly in the sky above us.

We were marked down at last! Suddenly a flock of whizbangs came over and dropped in front of the battery; then another flock came over and dropped in the rear.

"Bracketed," said Banjo. "Here's where we get a through ticket to horse-heaven."

"I have observed that men lie down under shell-fire, Banjo," I informed him, and promptly flopped. The horse-holder, for some fool reason, kicked me in the belly to make me get up, but I refused, and have never been sorry I did, for with the next salvo

the enemy split the bracket. He was still over as far as the guns were concerned, but one shell landed among us. And then I couldn't have got up if I had wanted to, for the horse-holder was lying on my head and Banjo's huge carcass was draped across my quarters; I could feel the heat from the deluge of blood that gushed from his torn belly. Yes, he had a through ticket for horse-heaven!

They split the bracket again, but this time the fragments whistled over us. Apparently the fire was being observed from a balloon. On the next salvo they must have been down to a twenty-five-yard bracket, for none of the fragments came near us, and three horse-holders were tailed on to Banjo, dragging him off me. I stood up and shook myself and one of the men laughed in a queer, high-pitched nervous manner. That shell had cost us the only bugler we had left as well as Banjo and two others whose names I never knew, not having had time to get acquainted with them.

Well, we stood there, looking at the overs and shorts crashing around the battery for about three minutes; then the fire shifted and went searching down the line—and presently more spare cannoneers came running up. But our guns were never silent; never for a moment did they cease their savage search for the battery that was firing on us.

About four o'clock the Skipper came down from his observation post. He'd been looking through a high-powered field-glass so long his eyes were badly strained, so Lieutenant Galwey went up to observe and the Skipper stood in the rear of the guns and counted noses while one of the lieutenants—he was a new

man I had never seen before—gave the crews the firing data. Presently he came walking sadly back to the horses and men grouped in the rear, looked us over, examined me for wounds, nodded to the horse-holders and went back to the guns.

"The Old Man's feeling mighty bad about the casualties," I heard one of the horse-holders say. "I hope he never gets it. I wouldn't feel safe in this battery with him gone."

Well, O'Malley, that first day of the drive to smash in the western front of the Marne salient was a fair sample of the long and terrible days that followed. We moved frequently, concentrating our fire on the places that needed it most, and food was very scarce, because of the harassing fire the enemy kept up on our rear areas. No hay reached us, but they did manage to get us up a little grain. As for the men, they were in luck to get one hot meal a day and not too much of that. Goldfish, corned Willie, and hardtack, hitherto despised, became something worth fighting for.

We passed through many villages after the infantry had mopped them up, and I grew callous to the sight of the unburied dead, the long lines of walking wounded, the smelly ambulances and the horrible wreckage. All of the horses began to fall off rapidly in flesh; galls and scalds could not receive the proper attention, and the sick report was heavy, with nobody marked "quarters," for while a horse could stand and even make a bluff at draft he was kept at it. Soon the weakest among us began to fall by the roadside. Replacements were hard to get and half broken when

we got them and soon our men, forced by necessity, took to stealing any horse they found unguarded. They stole them from forage wagons and supply trains, from French officers and Moroccans. But if I ever heard a hearty laugh it was the night a recent casualty replacement stole a poor gaunt brute, whose tottering legs could scarcely bring him to our picket-line, and all the old hands recognized Boodler.

"Take him back to the man you stole him from," the Skipper commanded. "You're the worst horse-thief in my battery."

But the soldier was afraid to do that, so he turned poor Boodler loose. Two days later we passed him lying beside the road. He was down at last, never to get up, so our Skipper, for old sake's sake, put a pistol bullet in his brain. I imagine Boodler would have thanked him if he could.

Soon the B. C. detail was afoot while their mounts went into draft. And still the awful wastage went on. The infantry would be in not more than five days, before what was left of it would be relieved, but they kept the artillery in while it could move and shoot.

At a place called Jauvigny Farm the Skipper got his. I heard Ern Givens say he'd lost his left foot, so I knew we'd not see *him* again. Then Ern Givens's mount slid on his nose one day and never got up, and after that Ern rode me. I think Lieutenant Galwey, who was now in command of the battery, would have liked to have had me, but as he had a pretty fair horse—a gray Arab recently stolen for him by his striker from a Moroccan contingent and dyed brown with coffee—Ern did not offer to let him have me.

Near a town called Vierzy I lost my master, and this is how it happened: A battalion of infantry was going to tackle Vierzy, and No. 1 gun of our battery was told off to go forward with the infantry as an accompanying gun—or a pirate gun, as it was usually called. This is making infantry out of artillery—almost; but it is sometimes a necessary procedure and was resorted to frequently when the retreating enemy, fighting a rear-guard action, mostly with machine-guns, had to be cared for before he did too much damage with them.

A second lieutenant (I never knew his name) went in charge of the gun, and the battery commander detailed Ern Givens to go with him. The infantry was attacking in the open, but we prowled down a narrow road through some woods, and when we came to the edge of them we found ourselves on the flank of our own lines. Our job was to knock out machine-gun nests pointed out to us by the infantry commander, and he certainly found plenty for us to do. It was close-range work—nearly all direct laying, which means sighting the gun as one would a rifle; and with this sort of laying a good cool gunner can do deadly work and save many infantry casualties.

Ern had taken the teams back a little way and off on a flank, while the gun went into action. We could hear the infantry cheering, although unable to see them, and since we were under cover only occasional bullets came our way, and I suppose they were wild.

Suddenly shells commenced dropping on the edge of the woods, and a few minutes later one of the cannoneers came running back to tell Ern to bring the

teams up quickly, for we had been discovered and would have to move. Just as we reached the piece a salvo dropped on the position. I saw one hit the trail of the piece, another dropped between the wheelers and the swing, and when the black smoke eddied upward, all the horses and drivers were down and the lieutenant had disappeared.

Ern and I were unhurt. I felt his spurs dig into me and in a bound we were off that road seventy yards into the woods, where he dismounted, left the reins dangling and ran back to the gun. I heard other shells bursting there, and limbs and twigs fluttered down on me as the shell fragments hurtled through the trees. But I also heard another sound—and that was our strangled gun in action again! Not fast, O'Malley, but firing at a cadence that indicated a mighty short gun crew or a pause between shots to locate targets.

For about five minutes the racket kept up. Then the gun was silent, and the enemy fire shifted. I waited five minutes, but Ern did not come back to me, so presently I went over to the gun.

The caisson was smashed and its teams, too, were all dead or crippled. Likewise the drivers and cannoneers. Ern Givens was standing by the open breech and an infantryman was tying up his arm.

"You stay with me, Bud," Ern was shouting, "and I'll make a real artilleryman out of you. Those Heinies think this gun is knocked out, but they have another think coming. A gun crew functions to the last man, and by Judas Priest, I can do direct laying. That case there contains the fuses. You wipe the dirt off

them and the noses of the projectiles with that piece of sacking and screw the fuses in. There, that's bandage enough. Machine-gun bullet, I think. My left arm's all jake, though. Grab that trail and help me swing the gun . . . there, that'll do. See that little faint puff of dust on the hillside yonder? Machine-guns—three of them. Now, then, hop to it, doughboy, and when you have a half-dozen shells fused, slip one in the breech. I'll do the rest."

The doughboy was willing and intelligent. With his left hand Ern helped him screw the fuses in, and when they had half a dozen ready the doughboy slid one into the open breech, Ern closed it with a snick, traversed his gun, sighted, stood up and pulled the lanyard. The shell struck below the machine-gun nest —a miss. But the third shell was not a miss, and with the other three Ern Givens raked the flanks of the position to make certain of his job.

"If I could manhandle this gun out into the open I'd get enough for a mess," he yelled to the doughboy —and then his glance rested on me. In an instant he had a trail rope out of the broken limber chest and the end of it he fastened to the pommel of my saddle; under his orders the doughboy cinched me tighter and then they both lifted the trail and turned the gun completely around. Quickly Ern tied the other end of the rope to the trail and while he and the doughboy shoved with all their might I got into draft in good old cow-horse fashion. I had dragged too many hefty steers in my day not to know what was expected of me now— so I pulled—and slowly the gun rolled out into the open.

At Ern's command I slacked up and came in; he

cast off the rope, gave me a slap on the rump and sent me back into the fringe of the woods again, while he and the doughboy swung the gun to the front and looked for new targets before running back to fuse more shells and carry them to the piece. When they had a dozen stacked there, they went into action again, just as the peu-u-u-u, peu-u-u-u of a burst of machine-gun bullets whined over them. I heard the bullets rapping against the shields—I saw them chipping pieces off the spokes—and then the doughboy crumpled across the trail. Ern looked down at him and shook his head, dragged the body to one side, then awkwardly with his left hand opened the breech, and the empty cartridge-case flew out. In went another shell; calmly Ern laid the piece and stood clear as he pulled the lanyard and the gun jumped back. The spade was in now, and Ern loaded the gun again and laid it; as he pulled the lanyard his arms went up and he fell over backward.

I watched him, dully, for what else could I do? In about a minute he rolled over on his belly and started slowly to rise. On his knees he crawled back to the breech and opened it, laboriously thrust in another shell and then began the sorry task of standing erect to sight. Up, up, slowly, clinging to the wheel, he came—and slowly—oh, so slowly, he laid the gun once more and reached for the lanyard. But he did not pull it with his hand. No, no. The weight of his body, as he collapsed again, did the trick; and as he fell the spade slipped out under the recoil, and the gun wheel ran over his leg as the piece jumped violently backward.

I ran over and smelled him, but he made no movement nor did he speak to me or seem to see me.

"Gone west," I thought; and then a madness seized me and I ran neighing, back through that narrow woods road until shells commenced falling in front of me. I changed direction by the left flank, and suddenly I was galloping through a French assault wave, and shrapnel was falling. I felt a number of smart blows on my back and quarters and knew I had been hit by another high burst, but my speed did not slacken. Indeed, if that were possible it increased. Presently I stumbled—something I had never done in all my life before—and rolled down the bank of a ravine into a stream that ran red.

I was badly shaken up and for quite a while I lay there on my side in the ruddy trickle and rested while a line of French infantry—they were the reserves of the outfit I had just galloped through—boiled into the ravine. Then they boiled out—all except one, who paused long enough to remove my saddle and bridle. He then gave me a half-hearted kick in the ribs and I scrambled erect. Before I could turn around he was up the other bank and gone, but wherever he went I hope good luck followed him. He had found time, even in the heat of a charge, to be kind to a horse!

I stayed in that sheltered ravine all night and most of next day, for there was considerable grass growing along the edges of it and I needed that and the water to give me strength, for I was very weak. Eventually I followed the ravine until it opened onto a meadow —or rather what was left of a meadow. I crossed this slowly and painfully and came to a heap of rubble that

had once been a fortified farm-house. Close to this ruin I found a wrecked forage wagon, four dead mules and their driver. There were sacks of grain in the wagon, so I tore at a sack with my teeth until good red oats came cascading out, and there I ate my fill.

I stayed at that wagon three days, and on the third day a detail of grave-diggers came by, picked up the dead driver and stowed him in a truck. There were some stretcher-bearers and a medical sergeant with them.

"Well, I haven't any use for a horse in my business," the medical sergeant announced, "but this one looks as if he might have been a good horse once, so I'll just wash and dress his punctures. He must be given his chance like the rest of us."

He fixed me up with first aid, and I stayed by that wrecked forage wagon a week longer. Then, feeling considerably stronger, I decided to put into execution a plan which had been slowly forming in my head. Yes, O'Malley, I was through with war. I had no further interest in it. Rogan was dead; Tip was dead; the Skipper had lost a foot and would never command the battery again; my dear master was dead, and I wished I were dead, too. I no longer owed allegiance to any man. I was a civilian horse anyhow, and the thought came to me that somewhere, far back of the zone of operations, could I but last long enough to get there, I might find a new master and in comparative peace and comfort round out the years that might be left to me.

I had decided to go over the hill!

CHAPTER XXXIII

TOO much talking had again brought on my old throat trouble. That's the mean thing about having been gassed. One thinks he's all over it, when suddenly the old inflammation flares up again. And it was that way with me for a week following my last spell of yarning with Charles O'Malley and Taffy about my life adventures. When I was able to resume my story, however, I found their interest in no wise abated.

"Just before you got that coughing spell that laid you up the past week," little Taffy began respectfully, "you told us you had made up your mind to go over the hill. Just what did you mean by that? Remember, O'Malley and I are not conversant with army slang."

"I meant, my dear Taffy, that I had decided to desert, to go A. W. O. L. permanently."

"What's A. W. O. L.?" he persisted.

Absent without official leave (I explained). In battle there are always a certain number of men unaccounted for; they are not found among the dead or the wounded, so they are listed as missing. A great number of the missing are skulkers, of course—men without sufficient courage to face steel, hot or cold; but of course, too, some men are listed as missing because of the impossibility of finding enough of them

to identify after a shell has landed in their immediate neighborhood. The "missing in action" who are skulkers can usually be depended upon to show up—when the fighting is over—with a plausible tale to account for their absence.

I, however, was going to be missing permanently, and in coming to this decision I felt none of the twinges of conscience which must be the portion of a veteran soldier. I had more than a dozen scars and a bad throat and lungs to prove I had not played the coward's part; although always frightened in action I had never permitted my fears to stampede me until the day I said good-by to Ern Givens as he lay so still and white beside that pirate gun. With him gone, the last link of loyalty I owed to humankind was severed. Once again I was a masterless, ownerless horse, broken down and unfit for service again for at least three months, and the knowledge that this was so plunged me into a state of profound melancholia even after the first terrible twinges of grief at Ern Givens's passing had left me.

From man and his terrible institutions, my thoughts by some curious mental reflex turned to the days when as an ownerless two-year-old colt I had wandered wheresoever I listed on the wild Modoc ranges. Ah, how I longed for them now! But I knew I would never see them again, that I was doomed to spend what little of life might be left to me in this foreign country among people whose language I could not understand; and as I picked my way slowly and painfully across a land strewed with the wreckage of battle I commenced to wonder whether there might not be in France

some free open range on which wild horses wandered; and whether, provided I could find this horse heaven, I might not be far happier than I would be if I surrendered myself to some Frenchman for the mere sake of the assurance of unfailing forage and shelter from the elements. For this, you must understand, had been my first rather nebulous plan, and I think I might have adhered to it (until I commenced my aimless wanderings I had never fully realized how much I had come to depend on man) had it not been for the salvage squads and the thieves from the mounted service.

I tried to avoid them by keeping to the woods and fields in my journey down from the front, but from time to time I had to come out into the open. On one such occasion a salvage outfit saw me and tried to round me up, but fortunately they made the attempt on foot, and despite my pitiful physical condition I managed to evade them, although if they had had a riata and a man capable of using it I would have been nursed back to health and sent to the front again. But I had had all I wanted of the front; it would never again be a pleasure to me to risk death for one I loved; so why should I risk it for a total stranger?

Ten miles from the battle-line a new artillery outfit going up saw me in a field, and an officer galloped over to pick me up. When he saw my condition, however, he rode back again. Thereafter I kept as far from traveled roads as possible, and when I had to cross a main artery of military traffic I did it at night. By day I kept my eyes open for a country of wooded, rolling hills, free from fences and the habitations of men, but in France apparently there is very little open

country. Indeed, as I picked my weary way down the valley of the Marne I discovered that as fast as the Germans were being driven back to the Vesle, the peasants who had deserted their homes and fled before the German invasion were now returning to their battered, shattered, ruined little farms, and were constituting a grave menace to my plans.

To these poor people, a horse—any kind of horse—was something of great value. Some of them had two oxen, some one ox and one cow, some one cow and a donkey, some a lone donkey, but none of them had horses, because practically every horse in France had been impressed into the military service during the long years of warfare.

Fortunately for me, however, none of these returning peasants were young men (there were plenty of immature boys), otherwise I would, undoubtedly, have been captured. Boys and girls and young women tried to capture me, and the numerous attempts caused me such exertion to escape that finally they began to wear me down. So, in desperation, I was forced to stand my ground, bare my teeth at them and when they came close, strike viciously with the leg nearest them. For I knew what they'd do to me—put me into draft as soon as my physical condition permitted—before it permitted, in fact—and I strongly suspected that few of them knew very much about the care of a horse.

I had no fancy to see myself harnessed to a heavy country cart dragging away fragments of shells, duds, live hand-grenades, broken rifles, old bayonets, knives, rusty canteens, wreckage of airplanes, wagons, gun

and caisson carriages, haversacks, blanket-rolls and the million and one things that littered the land. Among horses I felt myself to be an aristocrat and I made up my mind that while Fate ultimately might condemn me to draw a vehicle for some man's pleasure, my heart would break should I be forced to draw it for his profit.

My marches were short, and I did not travel on a fixed schedule, for the problem of sustenance would not permit of that. Mustard gas will lie in low places for days, and I had to be careful where I went to crop the scant herbage the guns had not uprooted. What was left of the unharvested wheat was dry, unpalatable and not nutritious, nor did I deem it prudent to eat any of the grain, but depended entirely on finding little forgotten forage dumps.

I sought the spots where artillery echelons would be most likely to hide, and as a usual thing I would find here some old loose hay and occasionally a sack of grain which had had to be abandoned in a hurry. Whenever I saw a shattered forage wagon I always investigated, and was very frequently rewarded by finding on the ground near the wreck loose grain out of the sacks that had been cut by shell fragments. And it was grain that I needed most, for what with a few wisps of hay and some grazing I managed to get enough fodder for bulk and thus keep my digestion in fair condition.

I had no idea how many wounds I had received in my last action, but soon I began to wonder if I was not due to come down with lockjaw—or tetanus, as it is known in the service. I had seen a great many

animals perish of this disease because of infected wounds; indeed, I had observed that men died of it also. As the days passed, however, and my general health continued slowly to improve, I came to the conclusion that when that medical sergeant had dressed my wounds he had given me also copious shots of anti-tetanus serum, so I ceased worrying on that score.

My wounds were healing nicely, as I knew out of past experience. They were drawing together and intolerably itchy, and always when the itch seemed more than I could bear without rolling, my thoughts would go back to dear old Pat Rogan and Ern Givens. *They* would have known I itched and would have applied some of their old-fashioned remedies to stop it. I remembered both were strong advocates of G. & S. axle grease for cuts and scalds on a horse.

In order to avoid peasants anxious to capture me, I commenced traveling by night as soon as the moon was at the full. Also, I bore to the southwest, hoping eventually to get out of the devastated district and into cultivated lands, for I knew that many crops would be ripening at that time of the year, and I had visions of oats and corn in shocks and good hay in stacks.

One day I met a soldier walking along a quiet country road, and upon looking closer, judge of my surprise when I recognized Private Pert Havers of our battery. Pert hadn't shaved for a month, he had no equipment and his uniform was worn and filthy. Also he needed a hair-cut so badly that I knew he must be a skulker from the battery; otherwise the top sergeant would have been hopping him to get it cut, war or no war.

"Yes," I thought, "Pert's become one of Pershing's wanderers. He couldn't stand the shorts and overs, so he beat it away from the front and now he's listed as missing. I suppose, when finally he reports to some outfit or is picked up by the military police, he will pull that old gag about being shell-shocked and having no memory of anything that took place for the past month. Once the war is over he'll get by with it, too."

I wondered how Pert Havers existed, but I was not long left in doubt. He was panhandling like a common bum. I saw him go to a farm-house and knock on the kitchen door. When a peasant woman came out he made signs that he was hungry—and I got a hearty laugh I very much needed when she threw a bucket of water on him, chased him out with a mop and abused him as he fled down the road. Of course she knew him for a skulker and would not take pity on his state; probably she had a brother or a father or a son who had died at the front, and knew a *man* when she saw one.

That night when I made my way to a haystack (I was out of the devastated area now) I found Pert Havers asleep in it. Having eaten my fill I lay down beside the stack for a little shut-eye, to be awakened at dawn by having my head rubbed between the ears. I got up in a hurry, but upon discovering it was Pert Havers and that he was trying to be kind to me, I stood still and stared at him.

"Well, if it ain't old Prof," he kept saying over and over again. "By golly, you've been all shot up again, haven't you, Professor? What you need is a whole lot of grooming and while I ain't got no groomin' kit I'll

do what I can for you." And he removed with a strange gentleness the old filthy first-aid dressings on my wounds, which he examined.

"You'll be a sound horse again in sixty days," he decided. "An' you'll be almost as handsome as ever, barrin' those scars an' providin' the new hair don't grow in white, as it usually does. Well, well, well, how did you get here, anyhow, Prof? God, if I only had one of your wounds I wouldn't be afraid to go back!"

He got wisps of hay and groomed me as best he could—why, I did not know, for Pert was one who, while in the battery, would never groom a horse if he could escape the stable sergeant's watchful eye. I had an idea then that his conscience was troubling him for skulking. He combed my mane and tail and foretop with his fingers and said kindly affectionate things to me and caressed me, until gradually I forgot what he was and was sensible only of a feeling of gratitude for his gentleness and his society.

Presently he left me and trudged over to an adjacent village to rustle a hand-out. My hand-out was at hand, so I remained and pulled at the haystack until Pert returned and commenced petting me. Before I knew what he was about he had a rope fastened to my neck and was urging me to follow him.

Now, I should have been suspicious of Pert Havers, but his kindness had lulled my suspicions. Moreover, he was a member of the battery and I could not bring myself to strike at him, to bite him or to balk. So without any very clear reason for doing so, I followed Pert and presently he led me to a farm on the outskirts

of the village, and into a wall-enclosed farmyard where there was a watering trough. I helped myself and when I looked up, the gate to the farmyard was closed and an old woman and an old man were standing in the kitchen door looking at me, while Pert talked to them in his horrible A. E. F. French. Whatever he said, it interested them, because presently they came out and examined me minutely and wagged their heads with satisfaction. Then they had a lot more argument with Pert Havers, which ended when they gave him a hundred francs and his breakfast.

The wretch had sold me to that old man and woman. *That* was why he had tried to clean me up—to make me look well, so he could dispose of me readily while all the time I had credited him with the most benevolent intentions. For a moment I thought of charging the cowardly traitor and stamping him to death, but decided that nothing would be gained by that, for it had suddenly occurred to me that it might be good policy to remain with this old couple for a while and receive, if possible, the human treatment I was so obviously in need of.

As soon as Pert had taken his departure, the old folks made no effort to conceal their huge satisfaction at their acquisition of me. The old lady brought warm water and washed my wounds thoroughly and put some sort of unguent on them which relieved the intolerable itching. The old man dug up a currycomb and a brush and groomed me for at least two hours, while the old lady, from time to time, kissed my nose and said nice things to me and fed me carrots.

I liked them both immediately, for it was obvious

that they liked me and sympathized with me and had every intention of being kind to me, for when the grooming was done at last to the old man's satisfaction (I have always had a suspicion, when I recall the thoroughness of his grooming, that once upon a time he had served in the French cavalry) he put me on a long rope and led me out to a lush green meadow where I grazed until noon. At night he put me up in a barn and scattered lots of clean straw under me; also he covered me with an old quilt and when leaving me for the night he slapped me on the rump, man-fashion, and said:

"Bonne nuit, mon brave cheval. Bonne chance, vieux soldat."

I didn't know then what the words meant, but subsequently I knew he had said, "Good night, my brave horse. Good luck, old soldier."

CHAPTER XXXIV

MY new owners were Monsieur and Madame René Groslier and they were a mighty nice old couple —so nice, indeed, that before I had been with them a week I had abandoned all thought of leaving them to search for mythical wild horses on a wild free range in France. The day following my arrival René pulled off my shoes, which eased my feet, and took me for a walk for the exercise he knew I needed. His old wife, whom I learned to know as Georgette, made much of me and fed me bread, beet-tops and carrots, and occasionally, to relieve the cough that was the outgrowth of my little experience with gas, René drenched me with hot milk and soup. This did me a world of good.

After a month with these good souls, the scabs on my wounds fell off, and the hair commenced to grow again, carefully nurtured with some sort of pure grease which René applied. And, as is usually the case, the new hair was white; consequently, what with my nineteen scars, I was just a tiny bit piebald, as you see me even to this day. However, since these little white patches are evidence of honorable wounds received in action, the judges at horse shows rather lean toward me when another horse is pressing me hard for the blue ribbon. Indeed, I am of the opinion that several of the cups and blue ribbons now in the Com-

manding Officer's show-case are attributable more to my war record than to superiority in horseflesh.

René and Georgette got me rolling fat and shining like a heliograph. Then one day René put an old saddle and bridle on me and, much against his wife's protest, mounted me. The minute he sat down in the saddle and I felt his light hands on the reins, I *knew* that old man for an ex-cavalryman, so I buck-jumped a little, cavorted gently and walked on my hind legs to see how he liked it. He was delighted and took me for a ride on which I behaved myself admirably. Thereafter each day he gave me regular exercise.

One day about noon, the church bells in all the villages scattered throughout the countryside commenced a wild and furious ringing, and old René saddled me and rode over to the nearest village to learn the cause of the uproar. The people were in the streets, embracing each other and weeping with joy and repeating over and over again, *"La guerre est finie!"* So I knew the war was over. To me, however, its ending brought no happiness, for I thought with bitterness that it had not ended soon enough to save those I had learned to love. There were fireworks that night, and all the people went to church and offered prayers of thanksgiving.

A month later a young Frenchman, in a cavalry private's uniform, burst into the courtyard shouting, *"Maman! Papa!"* and out rushed old Georgette and René and clasped him in their arms and hugged him tight and kissed him. He was their boy, home from the war unscathed, and at sight of the happiness of these old folks my heart swelled within me.

After the returned soldier had been fed, his father brought me out for the boy's inspection. Marcel (that was the son's name) looked me over with the eye of an expert, then saddled me and rode me across the fields. When we came to a little hedge he put me at it and I cleared it nicely, which seemed to please him very much. I could see by the manner in which he looked at me and the way he inspected me that he was no fool where horses were concerned.

A week later he rode me all day into the south until we came at last to a huge cantonment filled with American soldiers. In front of headquarters he tied me to a hitching rack and entered; and a few minutes later who should come out with him to look at me but our old divisional commander, the man who had almost ruined the happiness of Ern Givens and Pat Rogan back at Doniphan? And trotting at the general's heels was Rogan's setter dog, who recognized me at once and touched noses with me.

"You want to sell this horse, do you, my friend?" the general inquired in English, and Marcel replied in the same language.

"*Oui, mon général.* He is a marvelous charger for a general."

The general came around and looked at me closely, observed the old Triangle brand on my left hip and smiled like the fox he was. "Where did you get him?"

"My father raised him, *mon général!*" Marcel lied.

"Both you and your father are a pair of damned liars. This horse is a stray from the ——th Field Artillery of my division. I know him well. He wandered down from the front and your father picked

him up. See, he has been wounded. These are the scars of old shrapnel wounds."

"But I assure the general—"

"You will not assure me of anything. This horse is not your property. You have no legal right to him, and I'm going to take him away from you. He belongs to the United States Army. There are fifty men in this area who can identify him."

Marcel, who was as cunning and shrewd as any Frenchman—and as greedy—smiled and bowed politely. "Then the general will show to me the brand of his government, eh?"

Of course I wore no government brand, and that was one on the old man. But he was not easily outfaced. "When I say this horse is the property of the United States Army, my friend, I do not mean quite that. He is the property of a captain in our army, a private mount."

"Ah! Then I will talk with this captain, *mon général.*"

"He is no longer with the artillery brigade. He was wounded in July and sent home. However, I will, in his name, take charge of this horse until you prove ownership." With the words the general shouted, "Orderly!" An orderly came running out of the office. "Take this horse, Orderly," said the general, "and turn him over to the stable sergeant of headquarters troop. Tell him he is not to let anybody have him without a written order from me."

The orderly started to untie me, but the disappointed Marcel interfered. Quite calmly the orderly slapped him out of his way, and then Marcel had an inspiration.

"The saddle and bridle—they are mine," he wailed. "And my father should be paid for the care he has given this horse, *mon général.* This is brutal—wanton —terrible!"

"Here's a hundred francs for you. Get out," the general roared.

Marcel took the hundred francs and commenced to weep with rage and disappointment. The cunning fellow, realizing that I would appeal strongly to any general in need of a charger, and knowing that an American general would pay twice as much for him as any French officer could afford to pay, had planned to sell me at a price which would have represented a small fortune to his parents, but Fate had led him up against the one man in the world who wanted me, but who under the circumstances was resolved now to acquire me for a hundred francs.

The orderly stripped the saddle and bridle off me and tossed them to Marcel, while the general, his face beaming with satisfaction, passed his hands down my forelegs.

"This horse never belonged to Captain Burwell," he told the orderly, "but to an enlisted man in his command, who transported him to France fraudulently. I always wanted this horse and tried to buy him in Doniphan. When I learned of Burwell's departure for home, I sent word to this horse's owner to report to me, but it seems he had become a casualty, too, by this time. In reality, therefore, this horse is nobody's property, but I'll be damned if I'll let that cunning Frog have him. I'm going to bring him back to the United States. If I can locate the soldier's heirs I

shall send them a check, but if I cannot I imagine there will be no objection to my keeping the horse."

"Yes, sir," said the orderly. "As a private mount, with nobody to look after him, he's bound to be picked up by somebody, so the general might as well take him."

But the general was not destined to take me, for he was the one man in this world who I had made up my mind should never ride me. I threw up my head suddenly and struck him in the face with my forehead, knocking him down. Then I reared and struck at the orderly, who let the halter-shank slip through his fingers—and I was free.

I went out of that area with the speed of a tin-canned dog. That general had helped himself to Rogan's wonderful bird dog, but I was one thing on four legs that would die rather than permit him to possess me. I knew I would be pursued, and the pursuit was not long organizing, for presently five soldiers in a staff car came rolling down the road after me, so I look to the fields where the ground was too soft for them to follow. Across country I galloped, up over a hill and into a wooded plateau above, where I felt at last that I was free, not only of the general, but of the sly Marcel. I liked his father and mother, but I would never trust *him* again.

CHAPTER XXXV

ONCE more I was on the loose, and once more the old primitive yearning to remain on the loose stole over me. So I struck out toward the east—why I do not know—and day after day, with the exception of pauses to water and graze, I pressed into the east. But everywhere I went there were men who tried to capture me—young men just home from the war and, with the problem of rehabilitation before them, keenly alive to the value of such a horse as me. Sometimes they pursued me long distances on horseback, and finally I turned into the north because up that way there seemed to be hills and a greater area of forests.

In time I came to the Argonne Forest, although it was long before I knew it by that name. It showed plainly the effect of a great battle there, but it was a wide area where there were neither farms nor villages. What few farms and villages had been there were heaps of rubble now, so I paused in the Argonne and decided to make my future home in it. Surely, I reasoned, I shall find other lost and strayed horses here.

Alas, the only horses I found were dead. They were scattered among the mangled, naked trees, and not infrequently during my wanderings I came across the bodies of German and American soldiers that had been overlooked by the sanitary train when collecting the corpses for burial. As I gazed upon these poor

lost atoms I realized to the fullest extent one of the meanings of that word "missing."

But there were no wild horses in the Argonne Forest. I did meet a poor old derelict who had formerly been a wheeler in a German light battery. He had been hit through the lungs by a machine-gun bullet and left behind to die in the hasty retreat of his countrymen. Like all of us, however, he feared the salvage squad, so he had wandered off the road into the woods, and there in some mysterious manner he had been overlooked. His wound had healed, and although he had fallen away to skin and bone the first month, eventually he too went poking around old echelon areas, seeking waste feed, and investigating wrecked forage wagons. Gradually he had gained strength, but it was apparent at the time I met him that he would never be a well horse again. He had been gassed, too, and had a bad cough; he suffered from lampers, and I could see that it was only a matter of months until he would pass away.

This German's name was Otto. I used to roam around with him, saving him many a weary step by scouting for the best and nearest feed and then leading him to it. Although he had been one of our enemies I bore him no resentment, for he too had suffered, and suffering makes us all equal.

In the spring poor Otto died, and I was left quite alone. However, I was not lonely. The solitude, the freedom from responsibility, the wild life appealed to me strongly. My hair grew long and matted, and my hoofs, lacking trimming, cracked and broke at the tips, but I did not miss my grooming because I could

roll whenever I felt like it. I got through the winter very well, and in the early summer of 1919 I wandered west and helped myself to the growing crops in that sector. But I had learned discretion and made my raids at night, retiring at dawn to the seclusion of the woods.

Thus another year passed. In the following spring I was scouting around a village not far from Metz, when I saw a farmer bringing a load of hay into his farmyard. It had been long since I had tasted good hay, and this looked green and well-cured, so, having noticed that he had left his gate open when quitting work for the day, I came down that night after I had seen the lights go out in the house, and proceeded to help myself. And while I ate, that wily farmer, having observed me from an upper bedroom window, slipped down the back way and softly closed the gate on me.

I was a prisoner, for the wall and the gate were much too high and much too strong for me to think of attempting to leap, so I could do nothing but await whatever Fate might have in store for me. This proved to be a pan of oats which the farmer held out to me next morning.

Well, I fell for those oats. Who wouldn't? And while I was eating them the farmer slipped a head-stall on me and tied me in his barn. Then he summoned all his neighbors, and they arrived, much excited. I believe my presence in the country had been a matter of common knowledge, but some had believed me to be a ghost horse until they actually felt me.

That day the crowning humiliation of my life was accomplished. They put a harness on me and hitched

me to a very heavy old two-wheeled cart in company with a big black Belgian. Yes, O'Malley, I was in draft at last, and when I tried to run away that stupid Belgian refused to run with me. He just sulked on his side and dared me to drag him along; when I reared and plunged he paid no attention to me; and when I tried to kick the box of the cart to pieces the peasant laid a heavy whip across my quarters until I was glad to submit to his desires.

They drove me around in the empty cart that day, and the next day I hauled hay with the Belgian. Before the week was out I was doing my share of the draft, finding it easier in the long run to play the game rather than be a continuous rebel, for even if he worked me hard that peasant fed me well.

That was a filthy place to live. The barn in which the Belgian and I were stabled had a cement floor, which is the worst thing in the world to stand a horse on; our stalls were rarely cleaned, and we stood in muck up to our fetlocks; the atmosphere was vile, and the farmer begrudged us half enough straw to sleep on comfortably.

I had been there about a month when one night, as the Belgian was entering his stall, he slipped on the mucky cement, fell and shattered one knee so badly that he had to be destroyed. But I noticed he was not buried. No, indeed. The village butcher bought the carcass and sold it to his customers, and when I saw that my heart was pretty heavy.

Having no other horse to work with me, that farmer now hitched me with an aged ox, who would have gored me if I had not beaten a tattoo on his

ribs. This made him respect me, so we finished the haying together and then started summer fallowing. Day after day we pulled an ancient plow through the black earth, and day after day hot rebellion at the disgrace rose in my heart. I was resolved to run away at the first convenient opportunity.

Of course I did not want to run away with any harness on me, otherwise I could have departed at any time. So I was patient and bided my time and one morning, as I was led out to water, I noticed that the gate into the farmyard was open. Instantly I reared and struck at the peasant. He gave ground but held to my halter-shank, so I followed him up viciously and reared and struck again. This time I frightened him into letting go the rope, whereupon I turned and fled back to the solitude of the ghostly Argonne.

I spent the winter there. But in the spring a party of Frenchmen, mounted and with forty hounds baying in front of them, came through my domain. They were boar-hunting, but I did not know that then. All I could think was:

"Here's a big party of men and dogs combing the Argonne for me. By the corn of Missouri (I had got into the habit of employing, to myself, old Tip's favorite oath) I'll let them know they've chased something." And I streaked it out ahead of the pack. There had been so many well-organized efforts to trap me made by small parties that I had grown very wary and suspicious, and now this dog party decided me to leave the Argonne. I turned across the hills into the south, and soon the baying of those hounds was lost to me.

As I proceeded on my uncertain journey southward it was my habit, whenever I topped a hill of commanding height, to stand and gaze over the country below. Thus I was enabled to avoid villages and to confine much of my progress to wooded areas, and thus it happened that on the third day of my new pilgrimage I topped a hill and stood gazing at something which aroused all of my curiosity. Below me lay quite a large plateau facing west, and all over the face of this plateau and running down the slopes into the valley below were thousands upon thousands of white wooden crosses rising out of a sea of flowers. It appeared to be a city of wooden crosses, with well-kept streets between the rows.

It was almost sunset, and since this city of white crosses was deserted save for two persons, a man and a woman (an automobile with the driver in it was parked on the main road that led past this strange arrangement of man's), I decided to go down and investigate. I found a low wall bordering the place. This I leaped over and walked down a path between two of the rows. And then I began to realize I was in the last bivouac of a dead army!

Yes, that was it. The Great War had been over nearly three years, and the troops had all gone home, but here reposed those who would not come back from the Great Adventure. In columns of companies, row on seemingly endless row, the men of the great lost legion were lying on dress parade. Somewhere on that vast parade ground I knew Rogan and Ern Givens were standing muster too, and when I thought of Pert Havers fleeing from the fight my heart swelled with

pride to think that never had a craven leg trembled against my ribs. Pert Havers was missing, but Ern and Rogan were not and never would be. When the section chiefs called the battery roll and reported to the top, of these two he could say, with pride:

"First Sergeants Patrick Rogan and Ernest Givens absent, sir, but accounted for. They are with the heroes."

My heart constricted as all the old grief returned. The thought came to me—a foolish thought, I know—that I might call my buddies, and I raised my head to the darkening sky and neighed. Over that silent city my heartbroken cry went—again and again and again—but no deep "yo-o-o-o!" came back to me. For, although the men of the lost legion answer to their names in Romagne Cemetery, only God can hear them.

Suddenly, quite close to me, a woman's voice called softly:

"Professor! Is that you, Professor?"

I turned my head eagerly and nickered, for Mary Vardon was coming toward me with her hand out and her fingers snapping.

"Oh, dear God, are you the Professor?" she cried as I ran to meet her—and then her arms were around my neck, and my head was resting on her shoulder.

"Sam, Sam!" she called. "It *is* the Professor." She took hold of my long foretop and led me down the path to where a man in civilian clothes stood beside the automobile. The man was Sam Burwell, as I saw when he walked limpingly toward me.

"The age of miracles is still with us, honey," he said, and took my nose between his hands and kissed

it. "Yes, there's the old Triangle brand on his left hip, Mary, and he appears to have walked into some more shrapnel since I saw him last. . . . Yes, he's nobody's horse, Mary. He hasn't been curried since the Armistice, I do believe, nor has he been shod. Look at the length of his hoofs. . . . Well, I don't care two hoots in a hollow if some Frog in this countryside *does* think he owns my horse. I know different—and this old buddy has been A. W. O. L. too long. I'm going to steal him, Mary, if it's the last act of my life. Yes, old pal, you're going home."

"I saw him when he jumped the wall," Mary Vardon cried excitedly. "The little white patches on his hide fooled me at first, even though I said to myself, 'How much that horse resembles our old Professor.' But when he raised his head and *actually* called to the dead, I had to go up and investigate; then I saw the Triangle brand and realized that the little white patches were old scars of war wounds and I knew! Oh, Sam, dear, what a reunion! Here we are, out visiting the graves of your battery dead—making a little holy pilgrimage —and we find your old charger doing the same. Sam, I wonder if horses can think—if they have souls too. Do you suppose he knew it was Memorial Day?"

Sam Burwell did not answer her, for the very simple reason that he couldn't. I was nibbling the side of his face with my lips, and he was thinking of old days and the Great Adventure and the men who had ridden boot to boot with him while the caissons were rolling along. . . . He was trying not to be a cry-baby.

So at length I came back to my own. I followed Sam Burwell's limousine into an adjacent village,

where he hired a camion and had me loaded into it. Late that night we rolled into Paris, and I was put up at a riding academy in the Bois de Boulogne. The next day I was clipped and trimmed and shod and groomed and polished until I shone—and Sam Burwell rode me out into the Bois with Mary mounted on a French thoroughbred, and when we made a quarter-mile dash at top speed I ran like a youngster, only—a quarter was all I could do. Once I would be going strong at a mile and a quarter, but now—well, I'm just an old gunner that's been gassed.

I came home across the ocean in an upholstered stall, and crossed the continent to California in an upholstered express car with two grooms to look after me. And when I got out to Sam Burwell's country place here, who do you suppose came up to me and wept all over me like any lubberly boy of ten?

("I couldn't guess, unless it was the Top," O'Malley replied.

(I reminded him that they had never heard that man called by any name except the Top.

("Come to think of it, I don't believe we have, have we, Taffy?"

(Taffy shook his head.)

The Top (I resumed) is my beloved master, ex-First Sergeant Ernest Givens. He did not die that day by the pirate gun. He was hit through the body twice with machine-gun bullets and recovered from that, but when the gun wheel ran over his leg he lost the old pin below the knee. Sam Burwell realized, of course, that the loss of that leg had ruined a good cowboy, so after Ern received his discharge from the

service, Sam gave him a fine job taking care of Mary Vardon's (she's the Commanding Officer) show-horses. And what with a liberal salary and his compensation from the government, Ern is saving money.

When I got back he was already married to the girl he left behind him when he went to the war—and there's no danger of his strain being lost.

Six months have passed since I told the tale of my service to Charley O'Malley and Taffy—six quiet months, each day like its predecessor, days filled with the rich contentment that comes of good health, good food, good shelter, good care, enough exercise to keep one fit, the society of old friends who understand, and above all freedom from worry. Such days, indeed, as make one feel that the joys of the middle years far transcend those of youth—such days as old soldiers look forward to following their retirement.

Yesterday morning, just after Ern Givens had led me out of the box stall and tied me to the ring bolt in the side of the barn, preparatory to policing up my quarters, the Skipper came limping around and stood for a while in silence.

"Has the captain got anything on his mind?" Ern inquired presently.

Sam Burwell nodded. "You're fired," he replied shortly. "Busted flatter than soup on a plate. Sorry to have to let you go, Givens, but I have a good man coming to take your place this morning."

Ern looked stunned but made no complaint. He wouldn't, of course, because he isn't that kind. He merely nodded. "Very well, sir. I've been mighty

happy in your employ all these years and I thank you for keeping me on. Of course I realize that the job calls for a more active man, although I don't mind telling the captain that I've met men with two legs who couldn't handle the job as well as I have with a leg and a half."

The Skipper put his arm around Ern Givens's shoulder. "Good old red-leg," he cried. "You always could take them right on the nose without whimpering. Yes, you're fired from this job and promoted to a better one—one that you're eminently better qualified to fill. When my father passed away and left me the Swastika Ranch, he left me also his old general manager, who had been too long on the payroll to be fired, even if he deserved it, which he did not. I thought some of retiring him on an ample pension, but realizing that would break his heart I let him stay on. And now he has resigned to go into the cow business in a small way on his own. Your cork leg wouldn't be a handicap in the management of the Swastika Ranch, because your riding boss can look after the details, and I'll furnish a nice automobile for you and one of the boys can drive it. Your job will be to use your head and make that ranch pay dividends. Any objection to my program?"

"Yes," Ern Givens shot back at him. "I'll drive my own car and put that cowboy chauffeur in a saddle, where he won't be a luxury. That ranch'll be run as a ranch should be run and not as a rich man's plaything. Thanks for the promotion, Skipper. I'll take it. I like cows. I understand them, and to tell you the truth I've been lonely for some wide places for

a long time. This is a nice job, but it makes me feel like a crippled retainer. Not enough work for the salary you pay me. But I'm a cowman and a good cowman, if I do say so. If anybody can make your ranch pay dividends I can."

"Then that detail is settled. Your salary will be five hundred a month, with a nice house for yourself and family, free light, telephone and water, vegetables, beef and poultry. I suppose you'll do some riding, and of course you'll want a horse you can trust. I'll have the Professor expressed to the ranch."

"You must not, sir. He belongs to the Commanding Officer now. She found him, you know. And besides, the Professor is on the retired list, and if I'm going to make your ranch pay dividends I can't have any boarders hanging around. Every horse in the remuda must earn his keep, and as a cow-horse the Professor can never again do the things he used to do. If he's pressed a little hard he whistles—and that hurts me."

"Have it your own way."

"Who have you got to take my place here, sir?"

"Some old retired first sergeant of field artillery. A few months ago I wrote to the commandant of the school of fire for field artillery at Fort Sill and asked him to keep his eye open for some good old non-commissioned officer about to go on the retired list but capable thereafter of looking after a string of horses. The commandant is sending me such a man and has wired me that your relief should report for duty today or tomorrow. He says I'll be satisfied with this man, but that if I am not, to notify him, as he has other jobs he can secure for the man."

"There's a car turning into the avenue now, sir," Ern declared. "I wonder if this is the man."

When the car rolled into the stable-yard we saw a gray-haired man seated in the tonneau with a black-haired woman at his side. The man appeared to be about fifty years of age and the woman in the early thirties. She had a baby in her lap, a little girl about five sat between them and a boy of about ten sat on the seat with the driver. The man's hat was pulled down over his eyes, and I could not see his face clearly, yet there was something very familiar about him and the woman. I noticed, too, that the man wore with his civilian clothing shoes of the old light regular army issue. He came to attention and saluted Sam Burwell.

"Sir," he said in a pronounced Irish accent, "First Sergeant Rogan, retired, reports to the captain."

"Rogan," said Sam Burwell in a small, awed voice, "you're a great disappointment to me. The last time I saw your old carcass it was fit for burial. How dare you, of all men, report to me?"

"Ochone," Rogan replied in the mock-agony tones of one who believes himself to be hardly used, "'tis no fault av mine or ould Fritz' for that matther. I'm afraid, sir, it's just because I'm bad black Irish and hard to kill."

Then Ern Givens said something. I may not repeat here what he said, but it was soldier talk and terrible. "You dirty old skunk," he yelled, and with a hop, skip and a jump, he was beside Rogan.

"Ernie —— ye blackguard!" Rogan roared, and then they were in each other's arms, pounding each other on the back and rolling out the choicest line of

affectionate abuse any horse ever heard. Sam Burwell stood by, smiling at their happiness, and I gathered that he had known all along that Rogan was coming back and had staged this little reunion for the two old buddies.

"Well, say howdy to the Professor, Rogan," Sam ordered presently.

"Well, may I never!" Rogan yelled. "Professor, ye ould darlin', shake hands wit' me."

So I thrust out my front leg and we duked each other, and old Pat put his arms around me and kissed me on the nose and wept a little, because words and affectionate thumpings were not sufficient to express what was in his heart. Then he shook hands respectfully with the Skipper, and after that the trio departed for the house and Rogan and Ern did not return for an hour. When they did I saw they had been talking over old times and dipping their noses into something stronger than coffee. They had completely forgotten Rogan's wife and family seated in the car, but Laurette didn't seem to mind.

"Chéries," she called to the two old reprobates, "you are a leetle zigzag."

"A little?" Rogan yelled. "I'm pie-eyed, an' glad of it."

"I am desolate," Laurette complained. "Monsieur Geevens has passed me up like white cheep on the floor of Monte Carlo."

"Good Lord!" cried Ern. "Is that Laurette? I thought she and the kids were other passengers this jitney had to deliver in the neighborhood."

So Laurette hopped out, and Ern hugged her and

the kids, and Laurette got excited and did all the talking and some weeping. Then they all went over to Ern's bungalow to meet Mrs. Ern and compare their children, and I was left for two hours without food or water. Of course, in the midst of all that turmoil, Rogan had no opportunity to tell Ern his story, so when eventually they returned to the stables together, and Rogan gravely examined all my old scars and there was nobody to interrupt him, the story came out.

"It," began Rogan, "was a close call, although, God knows, I'd had thim before." He removed his hat and showed Ern a long white, jagged scar along the side of his head. "Some bone an' a spoonful av brains wint wit' that," he continued, "but not enough to ruin me milith'ry morals or desthroy me horse-sinse. The same shell took away a bit av me sirloin an' a piece av the round. I remember holdin' on to me failin' sinses long enough to put Tip out av his misery; thin the lights wint out an' whin they come on ag'in 'twas a month later in hospital.

"Four months I was in that hospital an' whin I was able to get about on crutches they sint me down to Nice to convalesce. Whilst there I met wan of the ould batthery—little Bob Hanford that used to ride swing on No. 2 piece. From him I heard that the Skipper an' you had both been kilt, so when I finally quit cryin' I thought no more av the ould outfit or av thryin' to get back to it. I'd managed to get paid in the meantime, so I sint for Laurette, an' we were four more months on the Riviera in a bit av a house we rinted, wit' Laurette takin' good care av me. The lad was born there, an' whin Laurette was able to

move, be the same token I was too, so home we came at governmint expinse. The A. E. F. was scatthered to hell be that time, an' I made no effort to get in touch wit' what was left of our old batth'ry, not being fit for djooty as yet.

"Well, sir, in the course av time, a medical board looked me over. I was a bit shtiff in me legs on account av the scars dhrawin' a bit, but I knew time would remedy that, provided they give it to me, which they declined to do, although I plead wit' thim to remimber I was an old soger close to me retirement an' what good would it do to rob me of me retiremint pay an' substitute the insurance compensation, which would only be taken away from me or rejuced to a pittance once I could walk wit'out too much limpin'.

"I bluffed thim that day an' got a promise to reconsidher me, an' whilst they were reconsidherin' me I wint A. W. O. L. an' down to Washington to see me ould friend Gineral William Snow, the chief of field artillery. I towld the gineral what the rascals av docthers were tryin' to do to me, an' faith he was sympathetic enough. But for all his sympathy, I could see he was not minded to poke his nose into the business av the medical departmint, so before he could tell me so I pulled a fast wan on him. Sure, I'd been too long in the service not to know that the only chance I had of shtayin' till me retiremint was to invint a sound milith'ry excuse for cuttin' red tape.

" 'Sir,' says I to the gineral (an' may God forgive me the lie!), 'for years I've had in the back av me head an idjea for great improvemints on the saddle for pack artillery, but divil a bit av spare time have I had to

wurrk it out. An' what good, sir, is an idjea av that nature to the artillery if I carry it back to civil life wit' me?'

" 'Divil a hair, Rogan,' says he, cockin' up the two ears av him at once.

" 'Thrue for the gineral,' says I. 'The presint saddle is far from efficient. The weight is not disthributed fairly on the mule's back, an' as a result what have we got? A picket-line av mules wit' sore backs. I want to make a saddle that'll be handier to pack an' unpack, that'll fit the animal's back wit'out gallin' the crathure, an' whin I do that, sure 'tis little enough to ask that the saddle be named afther me. The Rogan saddle for pack arthillery, eh, sir? What a fittin' finish to me long an' honorable serrvice, sir?'

" 'Hum-m-m,' says the gineral, and commenced walkin' up an' down. 'You're right about the presint saddle, Rogan. God knows you've had a wurrld av experience wit' it, an' if any man should know what's wrong wit' it you should. I'll do what I can for you, Rogan. I'll see the surgeon-gineral of the army this very mornin' and see what he can do for you.'

"For all me stiffness I fairly floated out av the good man's presince, an' two days later the Examinin' Board marked me as ye would an ould highway in process av repair: Dangerous but passable.

"I knew what would happen. Havin' done that much for me, the gineral would sind me as far away from him as he could so he wouldn't have me botherin' him askin' for favors he couldn't grant me in the future. Sure enough he had me assigned to Fort Sill, and there, for the sin av tellin' lies, they put me in a

saddlery shop an' towld me to invint to me heart's contint. I'd perfected one improvemint be the time me enlistment had expired, so they could do no less than let me hold up me right hand for three years more in order to finish the great job.

"So at long last I finished me saddle, an' considherin' the fact that I hadn't the ghost av an idjea in me head whin I shtarted, begorra, I inded up by havin' a damned fine saddle for pack artillery named afther me, an' received a complimentary letther from the chief av artillery himself. As for the commandant at Fort Sill, he was so plazed that whin I came up for enlistment ag'in he towld the medical officer to take me worrd for me physical condition an' to have a care would he undhress me lookin' for physical defects.

" 'Begorra,' says he, 'Rogan's head is O. K. an' I'll be usin' that same head to advantage until he retires.' Which he did. He made me insthructor av horsemasthership an' the care av' animals, an' whin I was retired it was as top sergeant av a batthery for the last day av me serrvice, so I could dhraw the three-quarters retired pay av that rank. Thin the regimint was paraded for me, an' the school band played me to the depot afther all the officers at the post had shook me hand an' wished me well. So here I am, provin' that come Sunday, God'll sind Monday an' I'll always have somebody to take care of me."

"Hurrah for hell!" Ern Givens yelled, and commenced singing "Caissons Rolling Along."

Rogan hit me a smart slap on the rump. "And be the Rock av Cashel," he yelled, "we kept thim rollin'."

Well, the caissons are still rolling along. I know

this is so because Rogan has a habit of sitting on an upturned bucket in the feed-room after the day's work is done, and gazing at me as I look out of my box stall at him. He smokes thoughtfully, but there is a far-away look in his eyes, and I know that in his mind's eye he is watching imaginary privates grooming imaginary horses on an imaginary picket-line. At other times I know that he sees on the side of the barn long lines of combat troops slogging through heat and mud and rain, men in khaki swarming over the Tartar Wall while Reilly's Battery pounds upon the gate with three-point-two shell, demanding admittance.

I know he sees long tropic vistas down which wind in single file the stout little pack-mules of a mountain-howitzer outfit, with old lost Tip mincing along at their head. And then this vision fades and the old comrades pass in review—some taking their last ride on a caisson with the Flag draped about them, bound for pretty little well-cared-for cemeteries in forgotten army posts in the days when peace gave time for sentiment—others squelching under the gun wheels when they fell, mingling their flesh and blood with the soil of France and left behind for the rats.

Old soldier memories; bitter memories, poignant memories, glorious memories of big men, little men, beggarmen and thieves, trained to the common faith that kept the caissons rolling along! I have a feeling that some day Laurette will come over from their bungalow to waken Rogan as he sits there on that upturned bucket—and when she touches him he will not be there. When he grooms me he has to rest frequently; he wheezes so I suspect a touch of gas the old warrior was too proud to report; he trembles at times

and leans against me and sighs, so I know the war took out of him much more than he will admit. But his future is secure and he has bred children and known, at last, the comforts of domesticity and the joys of paternity. I am consoled by the thought that he and my beloved Ern are very happy, nevertheless, and I am glad that together we drank deep of the wells of life.

The long pleasant years stretch ahead of us who have borne the heat and the burdens of the day, and while I miss Ern and will, in all probability, never see him again, I am content, for I know that all is well with him and that up to the last I shall have my other comrades around me. When I grow too old to masticate my food there will be no long, lingering death by starvation and malnutrition for me. Rogan will look me over and he will know! And then he'll borrow the Skipper's old service pistol and kiss me and put the barrel in my ear and let me blink out like a soldier. Dear old Rogan!

THE END

BOOKS
KENDRICK
BELLAMY
DENVER